

RICHARD WAGNER.

GAMBLERS say, that after the consummate bliss of winning, the next degree in the scale of happiness is the sensation of losing. Applied to the rules of artistic success, this axiom might be translated thus: Next to being cried up, the best thing for a man is to be cried down. How little the latter process, even if carried on in the most systematic and unrelenting manner, can obstruct the ultimate victory of great progressive movements in art, is best proved by the example of Richard Wagner. It would be difficult to discern at first sight, what there is in his dramas or theories to excite the ire of critical worthies; certain it is, that, wherever the former have been sung, or the latter expounded, the effect on musical critics has been that of the red flag on the bull in a Spanish arena. It is well known that in his own country Wagner's operas have retained their footing on the stage exclusively by dint of their immediate impression on the public, which in this case laudably upheld its own opinion against the incessant and almost unanimous declamations of adverse critics. Even at the present time, while Wagner's reputation is established beyond dispute, the large German newspapers look upon him with ill-disguised hostility, and

dole out their approbation with as chary a hand as their necessary regard for indisputable facts will allow them. Wagner told me himself not long ago, that if he wished to state a point of theory or experience in a certain leading journal, he would not be at all above a fear of its falling a victim to editorial scissors, or even to the waste-paper basket. A similar spirit of enmity on the part of influential journalists balked his success at Paris and partly paved the way for the signal fiasco of "Tannhäuser" in that city. *Quante molis erat* to uphold the standard of "the Music of the Future" against the ignorance and cliquism of musical criticism in England, the present writer from his own experience might have a long story to tell; too long, however, and too dreary to be interesting or (it must be hoped) even comprehensible to American readers. Moreover, my present purpose is not to write a diatribe or plead a cause; I only wish to give a short account of the life and artistic aims of a man who since the great success of "Lohengrin" at New York, cannot be looked upon without interest by any lover of music and poetry in America.

The Germans are fond of making a distinction between a man of genius and a man

of character. Seldom the two qualities are found together amongst them. Their lyrical poets generally live in the obscurity of small cities, whence they pour forth their song as the nightingale does her note from the loveliest nook of the wood. Even their dramatic writers are rarely men of character in our sense of the word; like the poet in "Joseph Andrews," they consider it their "business to record great actions and not to do them." Think of Schiller celebrating the hero of Swiss liberty in the æsthetic atmosphere of a diminutive German court. Wagner forms an exception to this rule—his nature is active, progressive. He looks on established rules and institutions with the suspicious eye of a reformer, but his genius is not negative only. He has overthrown much, but his reconstructions are vaster and more harmonious than the old fabric. If fate had placed him in a different position of life, he might have become a great statesman, a leader of nations. Being born in the obscure sphere of German middle-class life, he had no chance in that direction; so, fortunately for us, his energy was not diverted from that field of action to which the highest gifts of his nature tended—poetry and music. But the type of his character never denied itself. From his earliest youth his plans were of vast, almost superhuman scope. He himself tells us that the *Nornie*, the Pandora of old Teutonic lore, deposited on his cradle "the never-contented spirit which always seeks the new," and this fatal gift has remained the rule and guidance of his life-long struggle. Having thus defined the prevailing tendency of this genius, let us now look a little closer at its earthly surroundings and appendages.

Wilhelm Richard Wagner was born May 22d, 1813, at Leipsic, where his father held a small municipal appointment. After his death, which took place in the same year with our composer's birth, the widow married L. Geyer, an actor, and afterwards a portrait-painter of some merit. He, however, also died before our composer had finished his seventh year. We know little of his influence on his step-son. It seems, that to some extent he recognized in the small boy artistic talent of some kind, and wanted to make him a painter, but Wagner proved an awkward pupil. At this time he used to practice by the ear little tunes on the piano, and it is said that hearing him one day engaged in this manner, his step-father remarked to the mother in the weak voice of an almost dying man: "Do you think he

has talent for music?" After old Geyer had died, Wagner tells us, his twice-widowed mother came into the nursery to repeat to each of the children the father's parting word. To herself she said: "He wanted to make something of you." "For a long time afterwards," Wagner adds, "I used to imagine that something would become of me."

However, the idea of bringing him up as a musician, if ever seriously entertained, was soon abandoned. He was sent to an excellent day-school at Dresden, and received only occasional piano-forte lessons from his private Latin master. His progress in this noble art seems to have been anything but satisfactory. Instead of practicing scales and other useful digital exercises, he loved to hammer away at overtures and symphonies with a most abominable fingering of his own. After a short time his master gave him up as hopeless. "He was right," Wagner says, "I have never learned to play the piano in all my life." The truth is that he, the great virtuoso on the orchestra, looks down on that supplementary instrument with some disdain.

His first attempts at original production we have to date at a very early period. They were not of a musical but of a poetical kind, a fact full of significance in the future advocate of the "poetic principle" in music. At the age of eleven we find him pondering over the plan of a gigantic drama, conceived in the spirit of Shakespeare, but intended to far outdo the tragic pathos of that master-mind. Wagner describes his tragedy as a kind of compound of Hamlet and Lear. "The design," he says, "was grand in the extreme. Forty-two people died in the course of the piece, and I was obliged to let most of them re-appear as ghosts in the last acts, for want of living characters." We have no doubt that the piece was quite as ridiculous as this humorous self-criticism implies, but we have mentioned it, nevertheless, as indicating in its embryonic stage that Titanic struggle for the utmost expansion of artistic forms which characterizes the whole of Wagner's career. It proved important for his development in another respect. Not long after his play was finished he became acquainted with Beethoven's works, which excited his impressionable youthful mind to the utmost. His witnessing a performance of that master's music to Goethe's "Egmont" may be considered as the decisive turning-point in Wagner's life, for it filled him with emulative zeal to supply his own tragedy with a musical accompaniment of equal

grandeur, a bold resolve certainly in one who had yet to learn the rudiments of musical art, but again indicative of that indomitable courage and energy which conquers at last. He now saw himself compelled to make some preparatory theoretical studies; the first difficulties of thorough-bass and harmony once bravely encountered and overcome, impelled him to attack new problems; his attention became riveted, his genius roused; he had imperceptibly grown into the musician. I, of course, do not by any means wish to assert that by some miraculous process he acquired the mechanical part of that most difficult of arts, music, without a good deal of previous study. On the contrary, he had to combine his fugues and puzzle out his counterpoint in exactly the same manner as lesser mortals are wont to do. Indeed his struggle with merely formal difficulties seems to have been not an easy one. Patience and quiet application were wanting. His master could do nothing with such a pupil, and fairly put him down as a dunce, in musical matters at least; his family was in despair; only his own courage remained undaunted. He began writing overtures on a grand scale for the full orchestra, one of which the "climax of his nonsensicalities," as he himself calls it, was actually performed in public, but excited only irrepressible hilarity on the part of the audience, greatly to the mortification of the aspiring young genius. This was his first period of "storm and stress," to use Carlyle's words; everything was seething and bubbling. But soon the waters began to clear; his first disappointment cured him of his vanity; he began to see the necessity of theoretical knowledge, and a course of serious study under Cantor Weinlig resulted, as that excellent teacher expressed it, in Wagner's independence of formal fetters. But more than any living master could teach him Wagner learned in his intercourse with the great dead. The well-known Heinrich Dorn, at that time a friend, now the bitterest enemy, of Wagner, has described the young student's passionate, not to say violent, enthusiasm for his great predecessor's (Beethoven) works. "I am doubtful," he writes, "whether there ever has been a young musician more familiar with the works of Beethoven than Wagner was at eighteen. He possessed most of the master's overtures and large instrumental scores in copies made by himself; he went to bed with the sonatas, and rose again with the quartets. He sang the songs and whistled the concerti, for with

the playing he could not get on very well. In brief, there was a regular *furor Teutonicus*, which, combined with considerable scientific culture and a peculiar activity of the mind, promised powerful shoots."

Beethoven was thus the load-star of our master's early aspirations, and well had it been for him had he never swerved from it. But his longing soul had still to pass through many errors and vanities before, cleansed in the fire of adversity, it could return to the original purity of its ideal aims.

The surroundings in which we next discover our hero, seem certainly anything but suited to a Beethoven enthusiast. To meet the exigencies of life, he had now to look for a more lucrative employment of his time than penning eccentric and inexecutable compositions, and the conductorship of a small operatic troupe at Magdeburg being offered to him, he accepted the position the more eagerly, as the unconventional ease of theatrical life tallied but too well with the high-strung sensuality of his nature. Neither were his artistic duties of a very elevated kind. He had chiefly to conduct the light though clever productions of the French and Italian stages, then so much *en vogue* in the Fatherland, and he himself confesses his childish joy in letting the orchestra "bang away," after a fashion, to right and left of his conductor's desk. His own productions during this period distinctly show the signs of the atmosphere in which he moved. I will not encumber the memory of my readers with the titles of several operas and numerous *pièces d'occasion*, which owe their origin to this time of pre-historic chaos. They were written for ephemeral applause, and without any conscientious scruples as to the artistic purity of their effects. But this abandonment of principle, fortunately, did not meet with its desired reward; only one of Wagner's operas saw the light of the stage, and, owing to insufficient rehearsals and an accumulation of other unfavorable circumstances, proved a failure. I repeat that, upon the whole, this ill-luck must be considered as a decidedly favorable circumstance. It may certainly be presumed that sooner or later his higher nature would have impelled him to leave the flesh-pots of easy success for the toilsome desert-paths of ideal aims; but when, or how this exodus of the satiated soul might have taken place, nobody can tell. As it was, the cares and troubles of his narrow sphere of action soon became intolerable to him. The small emoluments of his office were

wholly insufficient to supply the demands of his refined, luxurious taste, and when in a spirit of obstinate recklessness he resolved upon marrying an actress, the *res angusta domi* further entrained his already straitened circumstances. In addition to his domestic discomfort, he soon began to loathe the professional jealousies and intrigues which, combined with an utter want of artistic spirit, characterized the society in which his professional duties compelled him to mix.

He felt that something must be done, to save himself from this sea of miseries, and the step he took in consequence was quite in keeping with the undaunted energy of his nature. He resolved to write a great dramatic work, and in order to preclude any possibility of his longer remaining in the narrow sphere of provincial stage life, he fixed upon a subject the appropriate treatment of which would require an amount of scenic splendor, such as only the largest stages in Europe would have at their disposal. *Rienzi*, the last tribune, was chosen as the hero of his opera, and to Paris, at that time the musical as well as the social center of civilized Europe, the composer looked for a stage and a public.

It is evident, neither does Wagner try to conceal, that the chief purpose aimed at in "*Rienzi*" was to obtain the applause of the multitude. From a psychological point of view it therefore scarcely marks a step in advance, and, indeed, abounds with concessions of artistic consciousness to the taste of the vulgar. But amidst the platitudes of ordinary stage effects we distinctly see in the score of "*Rienzi*" the action of a tremendous dramatic force, scarcely conscious as yet, and clogged with earthy encumbrances, but capable of growth and purification. Wagner wrote the poetry, and finished the music of the first two acts of "*Rienzi*" at Riga, where he had conducted the opera for some time. In the summer of 1839 he embarked in a sailing vessel bound for London on his way to Paris. The voyage lasted more than three weeks. Three times they were caught in terrific storms, and on one occasion the captain had to seek shelter in a Norwegian harbor. Wagner's imagination was deeply struck with the wonders and terrors of the deep, and the impressions thus received he was soon to embody in a work to which we shall have to return. In September of the same year he arrived at Paris, supplied by Meyerbeer with introductions to theatrical managers and full of

sanguine expectation. One slightly shudders in thinking of the possible consequences which a great Paris success might have had on Wagner's further career. Perhaps he might have been content to share with Meyerbeer, Rossini, and Halévy the lucrative laurels of a European reputation; but fortune, unlike herself, proved constant to him in her kind unkindness; all his attempts at obtaining publicity for his works were frustrated, and, to save himself from actual starvation, he had to go through the most degrading stages of musical drudgery, such as arranging tunes from popular operas for the cornet-a-piston.

Again the tide of despair was rising higher and higher—again something must be done and was done by Wagner to stem its destructive progress; but in what he did, and in how he did it, we see the process of purification which Wagner's artistic character had undergone during this second trial of "hope deferred." "*Rienzi*," as we said before, was written entirely with a view to outward success, to which the higher demands of art were to a great extent sacrificed; in the work which Wagner now began he scarcely hoped, nor even wished for this success. It was conceived and written entirely to supply a demand of his own nature—the demand, that is, of pouring out the anxieties and toilings of his soul in his inspired song. In this way music gave him help and comfort in his supreme need. The work we are referring to is "*The Flying Dutchman*." It was conceived during the eventful voyage to London; the music was written at Meudon, where Wagner had retired from Paris in the spring of 1841.

"*Rienzi*," finished in November, 1840, concludes the first period of Wagner's career. It was the time of his violent struggle for notoriety and self-assertion, without regard to the artistic purity of the means applied. The mode of his expression was confined to the forms of the French Grand Opera as established by Spontini, Meyerbeer, and others; hence this period may be described as his *operatic* period. With "*The Flying Dutchman*" Wagner enters a new stage of development. Henceforth he disregards the requirements of vulgar taste, or tastelessness. His works become the immediate effusion of his poetical inspiration, to which the forms of absolute music have gradually to give way. Ultimately he throws the whole apparatus of the opera, with its empty display of vocal skill and scenic *spectacle*, overboard. Even the name becomes odious

to him; he terms his new creations "Music-dramas." For the full appreciation of his vast schemes he looks to those to come rather than to the living generation. Hence the *sobriquet*—invented by his adversaries and adopted by him—"the Music of the Future." A close analysis of the ideas and principles comprised in this name we must defer for a little while. In "The Flying Dutchman" these new tendencies appear as yet in an all but embryonic state; only one circumstance we will point out in connection with it. Wagner's adversaries boldly assert that his reformatory deeds were the result of previous deliberate speculation, although the comparative dates of his dramatic and his theoretical works clearly prove the contrary. If a further proof of the spontaneity of his efforts was required his mode of conceiving "The Flying Dutchman" would furnish it; for it was only the symbolic representation of his own personal sufferings at the time. Friendless and loveless amongst strangers, he could realize but too well the type of his hero, who, doomed to roam on the wild waves of the ocean, longs for home and the redeeming love of woman. This intensely subjective character of his poetry he involuntarily transferred to his music, and was thus ultimately led to the breaking of forms insufficient to contain his impassioned utterances.

In the meantime his worldly prospects had undergone an unexpected favorable change. His "Rienzi" had been accepted for performance by the Dresden theater, and in 1842 Wagner left Paris for that city in order to prepare his work for the stage. The first performance took place in October of the same year, and its brilliant success led to the composer's engagement as conductor of the Royal Opera at Dresden.

It was natural that this first smile of fortune after so much adversity should have filled Wagner with elation. But he was not the man to rest on his laurels. During his stay at Paris he had become acquainted with the old popular story of Tannhäuser, the knightly singer who tarried in the mountain of Venus. This story, in connection with an imaginary prize-singing at Wartburg, the residence of the Dukes of Thuringia, struck him at once as eminently adapted for dramatic purposes. The impression was increased when, on his way to Dresden, he visited the romantic old castle surrounded by the nimbus of both history and romance, and overlooking a wide and varied expanse of field and forest. The poem to "Tann-

häuser" was written soon afterward, even before the first performance of "Rienzi;" the music he finished by the end of 1844. The fundamental idea strikes one as somewhat similar to that of "The Flying Dutchman." It is again the self-surrendering love of pure woman, which in death releases the hero; nay, to carry the parallel still further, the Venusberg itself with its lust, and the satiety following thereafter, is only another aspect of that same cruel world which in the prior opera was symbolized by the waves of the ocean. Both Senta and Elizabeth would in that case be the representations of that purest idea of art, which alone can save its worshiper from the world and its lures, "for music," as Wagner has expressed it on another occasion, "is a woman, whose nature is love, surrendering itself unconditionally." Of the opera itself our limited space will not allow us to speak at length. Compared with its predecessor, "Tannhäuser" marks a decided advance, both from a dramatic and musical point of view. The character of the hero, representing in its large typical features one of the deepest problems of human nature, stands boldly forth from the chiaroscuro of its romantic surroundings, and the abundance of melodious strains (some of them, as, for instance, the celebrated "March," of a popular character) in "Tannhäuser" has, perhaps, contributed more to the spreading of its author's name than any of his other works.

At the first performance at Dresden in 1845, the reception of "Tannhäuser" was, however, much less favorable than might have been expected. The public was evidently astonished and somewhat disappointed at this new language, so widely differing from the coarser accents of "Rienzi." Altogether the prospects of Wagner's popularity as an operatic writer seemed to dwindle more and more. The performance of his "Flying Dutchman" at Berlin had little more than a *succès d'estime*, while even that was scarcely obtained by "Rienzi" at Hamburg. The brief glimmer of hope was waning rapidly, and Wagner's disappointment was now all the more bitter for his previous experience of success. But even more than by his personal ill fortune he was disgusted by the rank spirit of narrow-minded coterie and inartistic humbug with which the most prominent German theaters were infested. Neither the progress of his own, nor that of any other true art could be expected under such circumstances. As years advanced, Wagner's disappointment grew into a state of

morbid despondency, in which change at any price seemed a relief. In this mood, and more from a sense of antagonism to things existing than from any distinct political persuasion, Wagner took an active part in the revolutionary risings of 1848 and 1849. The dream of liberty in Saxony and its unpleasant interruption by Prussian bayonets are matters of history. Wagner personally had to pay dearly for his short illusion. As a matter of course he lost his official employment and was, moreover, compelled again to leave country and friends, a homeless exile. Before following him on his new wanderings, however, we must mention in a few words a work, which owes its existence to the period immediately before the outbreak of the revolution: I am speaking of "Lohengrin," the fourth of Wagner's acknowledged operas, the music of which was finished in March, 1843. The story of "The Knight of the Swan," originally founded on local traditions of the lower Rhine, Wagner owed to the same mediæval compilation which had been the source of "Tannhäuser." In his version it appears combined with the mystic tradition of the "Grael" and the spiritual order of knights guarding the holy vessel. Lohengrin, the son of Percival, king of the Graal, leaves his blissful abode, to save Elsa, Princess of Brabant, from a false accusation of having killed her young brother. The love of Elsa and her deliverer forms the main subject of the drama, the tragic key-note being touched when Elsa, despite her promise of implicit faith, asks the name and abode of the mystical knight. This wild craving of Elsa to pierce the mystery which seems to shroud her lover from the warm clasp of her hand, is a touch of intense psychological truth. The style of Wagner's music is quite in accordance with the elevated poetical intentions it serves to illustrate. The supernatural and natural elements are blended in his strains in the most marvelous manner, and rarely, if ever, is our impression marred by those purely theatrical effects which not unfrequently occur in "Tannhäuser."

The first performance of "Lohengrin" is connected with one of the most charming episodes of Wagner's life—his friendship with Franz Liszt. The intimate relations between these two great composers, subsisting at the present day and under circumstances which would have made jealousies and mutual animosities but too excusable, seem to claim our passing attention. I quote the following extracts from an autobiographical

sketch by Wagner, published in 1851: "At Weimar I saw him," writes Wagner, "when I rested a few days in Thuringia, not yet certain whether the threatening prosecution would compel me to continue my flight from Germany. The very day when my personal danger became a certainty, I saw Liszt conducting a rehearsal of my 'Tannhäuser,' and was astonished at recognizing my second self in his achievement. What I had felt in inventing this music, he felt in performing it: what I wanted to express in writing it down, he said in making it sound. Strange to say, through the love of this rarest friend I gained, at the moment of becoming homeless, a real home for my art, which I had longed for and sought for always in the wrong place. . . . At the end of my last stay at Paris, when, ill, miserable, and despairing, I sat brooding over my fate, my eye fell on the score of my 'Lohengrin,' totally forgotten by me. Suddenly I felt something like compassion, that this music should never sound from off the death-pale paper. Two words I wrote to Liszt; his answer was, that preparations for the performance were being made on the largest scale that the limited means of Weimar would permit. Everything that men and circumstances could do was done, in order to make the work understood. . . . Errors and misconceptions impeded the desired success. What was to be done to supply the want so as to further the true understanding on all sides, and with it the ultimate success of the work? Liszt understood it at once, and *did* it. He gave to the public his own impressions of the work in a manner, the convincing eloquence and overpowering efficacy of which remain unequaled. Success was his reward, and with this success he now approaches me saying: 'Behold, we have come so far; now create us a new work, that we may go still further.'"

On his flight from his country Wagner turned first to Paris, where, as usual, disappointment lay in store for him. After a short stay in France he settled at Zurich, in Switzerland, and now, when the conductor's baton was wrenched from his hand, took up the pen of the critic to fight again the good fight of art in this new field of action. I must here again remind the reader that his great theoretical work, "Oper und Drama," was written after his first four operas had been finished, and after even the plan of his last and most advanced work, the "Nibelungen-trilogy" had been conceived and

partly executed. His dramas, so far from being fashioned according to a certain theory, were only, like the works of other composers, the foundation on which this theory was constructed. It will be my task in the succeeding paragraphs to sketch as concisely as possible the fundamental ideas of the new epoch in art ushered in by Wagner. A detailed account of how far these ideas are carried out in his dramatic works would be possible only by extensive musical illustrations. A few most essential points must suffice. Wagner's artistic deeds were of two-fold import—destructive and reconstructive. Destroy he did what may collectively be called the apparatus of the opera. In Italy the "Opera Seria" was considered from an exclusively musical or rather vocal point of view. The singer reigned supreme, and, to suit his convenience, certain forms of absolute music, such as aria, duo, etc., were bodily inserted into the opera, wherever the castrato or prima donna saw a fit opportunity of displaying their skill. Whoever has witnessed (and who has not?) a performance of Bellini's or of one of Rossini's early serious operas, will know from his own experience how every rule of dramatic consistency is grossly violated by such intrusions. The same applies, although in a very modified way, to the operas of Mozart and even of Weber, who always suffered the musical form to outweigh dramatic truth. Wagner wages a deadly feud against the virtuoso and his stronghold, the aria. His highest aim is the rendering of dramatic passion, and to this purpose the requirements of absolute music have to yield and become subservient. As to the spontaneous and entirely unpremeditated way in which Wagner arrived at this result we again borrow his own words. As he gradually emerged from the "grand historical" atmosphere of "Rienzi" into the purer regions of popular mythology, from which all his later dramas are derived, he in the same degree freed himself from the traditional fetters of the *drame musicale*. "The plastic unity and simplicity," he says, "of the mythical subject-matter allowed of the concentration of the action on certain important and decisive points of its development. . . . The nature of the subject could, therefore, not induce me, in sketching my scenes, to consider in advance their adaptability to any particular musical form, the particular kind of musical treatment being necessitated by these scenes themselves. It could not enter my mind to engraft on this my musical

form, growing, as it did, out of the nature of the scenes, the traditional forms of operatic music, which could only have marred and interrupted its organic development. I therefore never thought of contemplating on principle, and as a deliberate reformer, the destruction of the aria, the duet and other operatic forms; but the dropping of these forms followed consistently from the nature of my subjects."

The question remains, by what new mode of expression Wagner supplied the old forms thus eradicated? The answer is to some extent forestalled by the above quotation. It was from the innate, though latent melody of the spoken language, that Wagner evolved his musical *melos*, in the same manner as the poetic feeling expressed in his verses guided his musical inspirations. His music, in this way inseparably wedded to the dialogue, became in reality the legitimate exponent of the action, now no more interrupted by the *fioriture* of the virtuoso, or by the effusions of lyrical sentiment. The overplus of the latter was from the voice transferred to the orchestra, which, without interrupting it, accompanies the dialogue with an unceasing current of passion. The importance of this new function of the orchestra for the economy of the whole work of art is at once apparent. The vocal part becomes a kind of impassioned declamation, widely differing from the monotonous dryness of the old *recitativo secco* and developed, wherever the poetical situation requires it, into a stream of beautiful *cantilena*. Melody, therefore, both vocal and instrumental, is the very essence of Wagner's art, and the accusations derived from its pretended absence by his adversaries can proceed only from a degree of blockheaded obstinacy, any further notice of which on our part would be waste of time.

From this short deviation on theoretical grounds, we return to our biographical sketch. After his settling down at Zurich, his connection with the public performance of his works ceases almost entirely for ten years, but, perhaps, no time of his life has been more fertile in lasting results than this period of involuntary eclipse. After the many excitements of his public career, the seclusion of exile could not but be of beneficial consequence to a nature so apt to be entirely absorbed by the excitement of life and action. The first fruit of his contemplative retirement was the just mentioned theoretical work, in which the vague aspirations of his earlier years came at last

to a distinct conscious expression. But how little his creative power was affected by these speculative exertions he soon proved by new dramatic works, wider in scope and deeper in conception than anything he had done before. We now touch upon that *opus magnum* of his life, the ultimate success of which will to a great extent determine his place in the history of his art. I am speaking of the gigantic trilogy, or more correctly tetralogy of the "Ring of the Nibelung," in which the oldest tradition of Teutonic lore is embodied, and which for that reason alone may justly aspire to the place of the national work of art of Germany. The performance of the whole work, the last part of which, "The Dusk of the Gods," is at present in the press, will take place at Bayreuth in 1876, under the master's own direction, and in a theater erected for the purpose. Perhaps I shall on that occasion have an opportunity of giving this magazine a full account of the great Nibelungen-drama. Before an actual test by means of a stage performance has taken place, it would be premature to decide upon the merits of a work so essentially dramatic. Moreover, its dimensions are so colossal that ever so short a sketch even of the story would by far exceed the limits of this essay. Wagner has been occupied with its completion for more than twenty years, the book in its present form having been begun about 1851, and the last note of the music written not many months ago. Twice, however, during this interval, his attention was diverted from the "Nibelungen" by other artistic plans of no less import and beauty. The first of these was his dramatic treatment of the old tragic story of "Tristan and Isolde," written and set to music between 1856-59. Barring the trilogy itself, Wagner's disciples see in it the highest efforts of his genius, and this importance placed on the work may be my excuse for quoting here some of the remarks made by me concerning "Tristan and Isolde" in the programme of our London Wagner Society last year, when a selection from it was performed at one of the Society's concerts.

"Tristan and Isolde" is the fifth of Wagner's acknowledged dramatic works, its first performance (at Munich, in 1865) following that of "Lohengrin," after an interval of fifteen years. The step in advance marked by it in its author's development, and in that of dramatic music in general, is proportionate to this lapse of time. According to his own assertion, Wagner wrote it with the full concentrated power of his inspiration, freed at

last from the fetters of conventional operatic forms, with which he has broken here definitely and irrevocably. In "Tristan and Isolde" we hear for the first time the unimpaird language of dramatic passion, intensified by an uninterrupted flow of expressive melody, the stream of which is no longer obstructed or led into the artificial canals of aria, cavatina, etc. Here also the orchestra obtains that wide range of emotional expression which enables it, like the chorus of the antique tragedy, to discharge the dialogue of an overplus of lyrical elements, without weakening the intensity of the situation.

After the stated facts, it cannot surprise us that our music-drama (for opera would be a decided misnomer) has become a bone of contention between the adherents of the liberal and conservative schools of music. Many people who greatly admire "certain things" in "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin" draw the line at "Tristan and Isolde," which, on the other hand, is considered by the advanced party as the representative work of a new epoch in art. A musician's position to the present work may indeed be considered as decisive as to his general tendency toward the past or future.

About Wagner's treatment of the old story the following words must suffice. The subject of his tragedy is taken from the Celtic Mabinagi of "Tristrem and Iseult," which, at an early stage, became popular among different nations, and found its most perfect mediæval treatment in Gottfried von Strassburg's immortal epic. Our own modern poet has followed his original closely, pruning, however, and modifying where the economy of the drama seemed to require it. The scene opens on board the vessel destined to carry the unwilling Irish bride to old King Marke. Despair and love's disappointment, together with the insult inflicted upon her family by Tristan's victory over her kinsman, Morott, rankle in Isolde's bosom, and drive her to the resolution of destroying her own life, together with that of her beloved enemy. Tristan is invited to drink with her the cup of atonement, but, without Isolde's knowledge, the prepared poisonous draught is changed by her faithful companion, Brangäne, for the love-philter.

The reader will perceive at once the immense dramatic force of this version, compared with the old story, where the fatal potion is taken by a pure mistake. This potion itself becomes in Wagner only the symbol of irresistible love, which, to speak

with the Psalmist, is "strong as death" and knows no fetter.

The other important work carried on at the same time with the "Nibelungen" is the comic opera of the "Meistersinger von Nürnberg," which was finished in October, 1869. The first draft of the book was written as early as 1845, immediately after the composition of "Tannhäuser," with an intention of parodying the romantic singers of the middle ages by their *bourgeoise* counterfeits, in the manner of the antique satyr-drama. The second version of the libretto, however, has been considerably modified. The worthy burghers of the beautiful German city appear in a more favorable light, the formal philistinism of their poetic doings being leavened by an admixture of true homely feeling. Hans Sachs, the poet and shoemaker, round whom, as their center figure, the numerous *dramatis personæ* are grouped, represents the rising citizen of the sixteenth century in his strength and justified pride of work. The character throughout is noble and grand in conception and ranks among the highest creations of Wagner's muse. A romantic love story of sweetest charm is interwoven with the scenes of busy citizen-life, and in the treatment of the latter Wagner displays throughout a power of humorous delineation for which his warmest admirers had scarcely given him credit. Wherever the "Meistersinger" has been adequately performed the success has been brilliant, and at the present day this last work of Wagner keeps its place on the *repertoires* of the great German theaters together with his first four operas. This is more than can be said of "Tristan," which, although received with enthusiasm on two or three special occasions, seems

as yet too remote from the taste and understanding of ordinary amateurs to meet with general appreciation.

The remaining important facts of Wagner's biography up to the present day can be summed up in few words. In 1861, he went to Paris to superintend the performance of "Tannhäuser," which ended in the celebrated fiasco of the opera, owing perhaps more to political than to artistic prejudices. Previous to the fatal event three concerts at the "*Théâtre Italien*," consisting of Wagner's works, and conducted by himself, were received with enthusiasm, and amongst those who raised their voices in his defense against popular condemnation were men like Gautier, Champfleury and Charles Baudelaire—some small comfort to Wagner, perhaps, in his third and worst Parisian disappointment. In 1864, the art-loving King of Bavaria called Wagner to Munich, to assist in the re-organization of the theatrical and musical institutions of that city. Here he resided for two years and witnessed the excellent performance of "Tristan and Isolde," under the direction of Dr. von Bülow. About two years ago he settled at Bayreuth, where he has been living ever since, occupied with the preparations for the performance of his last and greatest work. In 1870, he was married for the second time, to Cosima von Bülow, daughter of Franz Liszt.

Here I must close my remarks, brief and insufficient as they may appear. My purpose is attained, if by my calm, matter-of-fact statement, I have succeeded in drawing for the American reader a distinct though ever so bold outline of a man and a movement in art, both so important and both so peculiarly distorted by the party passions of friend and foe.

THE LIFE AND PASSION OF HECTOR BERLIOZ.

"BERLIOZ," says M. Gounod, in the charming introduction which he wrote to the recently collected letters of the great composer, "was one of the profoundest emotions of my youth. He was fifteen years my senior; he was, therefore, thirty-four at the time when I, a boy of nineteen, was studying composition at the Conservatory, under the direction of Halévy. I well remember the impression then produced upon me by Berlioz and his works, rehearsals of which were often given in the concert-hall of the Conservatory. No sooner had my master Halévy corrected my lesson than I hastened from the class to go and hide myself in a corner of the concert-room, and there I grew wild over that strange, passionate, convulsive music which opened before me such new and nobly colored horizons. One day I had been present at a rehearsal of the then unpublished symphony of 'Romeo and Juliet,' which Berlioz was to produce in public for the first time a few days later. I was so struck with the ampleness of the great *finale* of the reconciliation of the Montagues and Capulets that I went out, carrying away entire in my memory the superb phrase of Friar Laurence, '*Jurez tous par l'auguste symbole!*' A short time afterward, I called upon Berlioz, and, sitting down at the piano, I played the above-mentioned passage. He opened his eyes very widely, and, looking sharply at me, he said, 'Where in the world did you get that?' 'At one of your rehearsals,' I answered. He could not believe his ears."

This little paragraph serves to show how sincere is the admiration of the composer of the opera of "Faust" for the great eccentric master who wrote the "Damnation de Faust," which Gounod himself qualifies as "magnificent." M. Gounod speaks with tender affection of the extravagant, fantastic nature of Berlioz, of the nervous anger which prompted him to rail at Bellini and Cherubini, and of the honest, confiding manner in which he poured out the secrets of his soul to his friends. In the letters now published the reader will find the impress of the real Berlioz in almost every line. Some time since, a volume, very carefully edited by M. Daniel Bernard, and treating of the labors and travels of Berlioz, appeared in Paris. It gave but a poor idea of the man of genius and his work, compared with that which may be obtained from the composer's own correspondence with one of his most intimate friends. A perusal of these fiery letters fully justifies the conclusions at which M. Gounod arrived after reading them, and which he has chronicled as follows:

"There are, in humanity, certain beings gifted with particular sensitiveness, who feel nothing in the same manner or degree as other people feel, and for whom the exception becomes the rule. In the cases of these persons, their peculiarities of nature explain those of their lives, which, in their turn, explain those of their destiny. Now, these are the exceptions which lead the world; and it should be so, because these are the ones who pay with their battles and their sufferings for the movement and the enlightenment of the human race. . . . Berlioz was, like Beethoven, one of the unfortunate victims of the dolorous privilege of being an exception, and he paid dearly for this heavy responsibility." And here M. Gounod indulges in some sharp remarks upon the revolt of the masses against any one who, in the fine arts, dares to show individuality, or to decry and desert conventional methods. "Was it," he cries, "the crowd which formed Raphael and Michael Angelo, Mozart and Beethoven, Newton and Galileo? The crowd! the mass! It passes its whole existence in judging and taking back its judgment, in condemning in rotation its repugnances and its fascinations; and how can you expect it to be a competent judge? No—the crowd first flagellates and crucifies, and then reviews its decrees with a repentance which, generally, is not that of the contemporary generation, but of later ones; and it is on the tomb of the man of genius that the crowns of *immortelles* which were refused his brow are heaped. The definite judge, which is posterity, is but a superposition of successive minorities. Contemporary success is usually only a question of fashion; it proves that the work is up to the level of its time, but by no means that it ought to survive it; there is consequently no reason to be very proud of it. Berlioz was a man all of one piece, without concessions or compromises; he belonged to the race of 'Alcestes,' and naturally he had all the 'Orontes' against him. Heaven knows how numerous the 'Orontes' are! People have found him crabbed, quarrelsome, fierce—I don't know what else! But, in order to understand this excessive sensitiveness pushed to the verge of irritability, it would be necessary to take account of all the irritating things, the personal trials, the thousand rebuffs suffered by this fiery soul, incapable of humble servility and cowardly toadying; and it is noteworthy that, however harsh his judgments may have seemed to those upon whom they were pronounced, none of them were ever attributed to the shameful motive of a jealousy which would have been

entirely incompatible with the majestic proportions of this noble, generous, and loyal nature. The trials which Berlioz had to encounter as competitor for the chief prize of Rome were the faithful image, and like the prophetic prelude, to those which he had to meet later in his career. He had to compete four times, and did not obtain the prize until 1830, when he was twenty-seven years old, by sheer perseverance and despite obstacles of every kind. The same year in which he took the prize with his cantata of 'Sardanapalus,' he produced a work which showed clearly the height which he had already reached in artistic development, as to conception, color, and experience. His 'Symphonie Fantastique' (episode from the life of an artist) was a veritable musical event, of the importance of which some idea may be gained from the fanaticism of its supporters and the violent opposition of its enemies. However much discussion there may be over such a composition, it certainly reveals, in the young man who produced it, absolutely superior faculties of invention, and a powerful poetic sentiment which is found in all his other works. Berlioz drew into musical circulation a considerable number of orchestral effects and combinations unknown until he appeared, and which very illustrious musicians speedily adopted; he revolutionized the demand of instrumentation, and in this respect, at least, he may be said to have formed a school. Yet, despite remarkable triumphs, in France as in foreign countries, Berlioz was fought against all his life; in spite of performances to which his personal direction as chief of orchestra and his indefatigable energy added many chances of success, and many elements of clearness, he never had any but a partial and restrained public; that public, that *everybody*, that gives to success the character of popularity did not come to him, and Berlioz died of this lack of popular success. 'The Trojans,' that work which he had foreseen would prove the source of so much chagrin for him, 'The Trojans' finished him; it may be said of him, as of his heroic namesake Hector, that he perished under the walls of Troy. . . . In Berlioz's nature, all impressions, all sensations, were carried to extremes; he knew neither joy nor sadness, except at delirious pitch. As he said of himself, he was a "volcano." Sensitiveness carries us as far in sorrow as in joy; Thabor and Golgotha are similar. Happiness does not consist in the absence of suffering, any more than genius consists in the absence of defects. Great geniuses suffer and ought to suffer, but they are not to be pitied; they have known ecstasy unknown to the rest of men, and, if they have wept in anguish, they have also shed tears of ineffable joy; that alone is a heaven for which one can never pay dearly enough."

The letters which give the most accurate picture of the life and passion of Hector Berlioz were nearly all written to a single friend, M. Humbert Ferrand. To him the fiery composer poured out his soul for long years—during his early struggles and his later triumphs, in distress, in hopefulness, in despair. Berlioz seems to have sought refuge from the fierce sorrows and passions which at times threatened to consume him in correspondence with his beloved friend. Here, in these hurried epistles, is his real autobiography, written as few men, even of genius, have ever written theirs before or since. The correspondence begins at the epoch when Berlioz was struggling for the prize mentioned by M. Gounod, and when he was at the same time studying medicine in Paris. His family was indignant at his devotion to music, and his father, quite a noted physician, located at Côte-Saint-André, in the Isère, cut off his pension when he learned that he had neglected his medical studies to attend the Conservatory of Music. The result was that young Berlioz, who had been rather delicately brought up, was reduced to sad straits for a short time. But he went bravely into the chorus at the Nouveautés Théâtre, thus earning a wretched pittance of fifty francs per month, while he followed the courses of Reicha and Le Sueur at the Conservatory. He brought out a mass, and, although it yielded him nothing at all, he determined from the moment that this work had been produced to devote himself entirely to music. Meantime, he appears to have had the good sense to go home into the country and make an effort to change the hard-hearted decision of his parents. The stomach of youth will not listen to reason, and Berlioz, at twenty-two, might possibly have sacrificed his dignity rather than live on bread and cheese, while at thirty-two neither Chambertin nor costliest meats would have made him waver an inch. He was already an iconoclast, at the time of this journey home, as the following extract from his letter to his friend amply proves. In the omnibus which conveyed him from the diligence station to the country village where his parents resided, he found two young persons "who looked to him like *dilettanti*, and whom, as such, he resolved not to enter into conversation with.

"But presently," he wrote, "they informed me that they were going to the Saint-Bernard Mountain to make some sketches, and that they were pupils of MM. Guérin and Gros: whereupon I told them, in my turn, that I was a pupil of Le Sueur. They complimented me much on the talent and character of my master, and one of them happened to hum a chorus from 'The Danaïdes.' "'The Danaïdes'"! I cried, 'then you are not a *dilettante*!' 'I a *dilettante*!' he answered. 'Why, sir, I have seen Derivis and

of Danaüs and Hypermnestra.' 'Oh!' And we were good friends from that moment, without further preamble. . . . 'But, gentlemen,' said I to them, 'how does it happen that—not being musicians—you have not been infected with the virus of *dilettantism*, and that Rossini has not made you turn your backs on common sense and everything natural?' 'It is,' they replied, 'because, being accustomed to seek in painting the grand, the beautiful, and the natural especially, we have not been able to overlook them in the sublime *tableaux* of Gluck and Saliéri, nor in the tender and pathetic accents of Madame Branchu and her worthy rival. Consequently, the music at present fashionable does not seduce us any more than the arabesques and *croquis* of the Flemish school do.' 'Now here,' adds Berlioz, in enthusiastic vein, 'are people who are worthy to go to the opera, worthy of hearing and understanding "*Iphigénie en Tauride*!"'"

Young Berlioz alarmed his parents very much by his open criticism of the great, and they endeavored to force him back into practical life. He was obstinate in his refusal to have anything further to do with pills, and his mother, who appears to have been of exceedingly nervous temperament, thought it her duty to frighten him with her malediction. It was terrible while it lasted—the mother fancying that her religion compelled her to cut him off if he persisted in his determination to write music for the theatre; but after a time her heart relented, and it was, doubtless, largely due to her influence that he succeeded in obtaining permission to return to Paris and to begin anew his musical studies. The good mother provided him with certain very needful moneys, which the father was not disposed to accord, and probably gave him a double blessing, because her conscience had once compelled her to curse him. But this reconciliation lasted only a few months. The father continued to reproach him, by letter, and at last, when Berlioz refused to obey a peremptory summons to return home, definitely turned him adrift. It was then that the young composer saw the wolf at the door, and that he was compelled again to sing in a theatrical chorus.

But he labored, as few composers have labored, and in the midst of every conceivable discouragement. On the 29th of November, 1827, he wrote to his friend M. Ferrand, giving him an account of the second hearing of his new mass in the Church of Saint-Eustache, and also a report of the manner in which he had failed in a *concours* at the Institute. "My mass was performed," he wrote, "on Sainte-Cecilia's day, with double the success of the first time. The few corrections which I had made had very materi-

ally improved it. The morceau (*Et iterum venturus*), especially, which had failed the first time, was brought out on this occasion in a thunderous manner, with six trumpets, four horns, three trombones, and two ophicleides. The song of the choir which follows, and which I have had executed by all the voices at the octave, with a blare of brass in the middle, produced a terrible impression on everybody. For my part, I had preserved my calmness up to that point, and it was very important that I should not be troubled. I was leading the orchestra; but, when I noted that picture of the last judgment, that announcement of the coming, sung by six *basses-tailles* in unison, that terrible *clangor tubarum*, those cries of the frightened multitude represented by the choir—everything, in short, rendered exactly as I had conceived it—I was seized with a convulsive trembling, which I had the force to control until the end of the morceau, but which constrained me then to sit down and to let my orchestra repose for some minutes. I could stand alone no longer, and I feared lest the *bâton* should fall from my hands. Ah! why were you not there? I had a magnificent orchestra. I had invited forty-five violins, and thirty-two were present; and there were eight altos, ten violoncellos, and eleven *contre basses*; but, unluckily, I had not quite enough voices for such an immense church as Saint-Eustache. . . . However, I have succeeded beyond my hopes; at last I have a real party to support me at the Odéon, at the Bouffes, at the Conservatory, and the Gymnase. . . . I had sent letters of invitation to all the members of the Institute; I was anxious to have them hear the execution of what they are pleased to term *inexecutable* music; for my mass is at least thirty times more difficult than my competitive cantata, and you know that I was obliged to withdraw from the competition because M. Rifant could not play me on the piano, and M. Berton hastened to declare that I could not be interpreted by an orchestra. My great crime in the eyes of this old and cold classical world is trying something new. 'It is a pure chimera, my dear fellow,' said one of the old school to me the other day; 'there is nothing new in music; all the great masters submitted to certain musical forms which you are not willing to adopt. Why seek to do better than the great masters?' " And we can imagine Berlioz, with that wealth of language for which he was renowned, replying to this disciple of the conventional, and horrifying him with the vehemence and the hardihood of his sentiments.

The decided preference of Berlioz for the romantic school in music was greatly increased in volume by the appearance, in Paris, in 1827, of a beautiful English actress named Smithson, who

introduced the heroines of Shakespeare to the Parisian public on the stage of the Odéon. Kean, Macready, and Kemble were in the company in which Miss Smithson achieved signal triumphs, and so great was the charm of her acting for the French that they rather ignored the merits of her associates. Berlioz saw her for the first time in the character of Ophelia. He wrote to his friend Ferrand that "the effect of her prodigious talent or of her dramatic genius on my imagination and my heart can be compared only to the commotion which my first acquaintance with the works of the poet whom she so nobly interprets produced in my soul. Shakespeare stunned me. . . ." Berlioz loved Miss Smithson at first sight, but, as he was poor and unknown and she was then at the summit of fame, he despaired of ever making his love known to her. He raved, in his letters to Ferrand, about her; he quoted Shakespeare; he wrote music in which he sought to embody Shakespeare's noblest conceptions; he was Shakespeare-mad. The force of his passion made him ill; and, when he recovered, he decided to make a supreme effort to attract the favorable notice of his idol. He endeavored to do something which no French composer had ever tried before him—to give a concert, composed of his own works, at the Conservatory. The enemies of his style placed obstacles before him, but he overcame them all. The concert was a gratifying success, and Paris was excited and pleased with the "Overture to Waverley," the "Resurrexit," and the "Francs-Juges." "Ah, when the 'Resurrexit' from my mass was produced, as you have never heard it since I corrected it, and with thirty male and fourteen female voices, the hall of the Royal School of Music for the first time witnessed the players in the orchestra leaving their places as soon as the last strain was played, in order that they might join in the applause of the public. The violin-bows fell like hail on the *basses* and *contre basses*; the ladies in the chorus cried out; when one round of cheers was finished, another began. I threw myself down on the cymbals in my obscure corner of the orchestra, and burst into tears." In the heat of his triumph, the youthful composer indulged in the most extravagant language in his letters to Ferrand, who, by the way, was the author of the libretto of the "Francs-Juges." His sentences were hysterical; his jubilation was boisterous. He recited the emotions of each member of the orchestra, and represented them as even more excited, if possible, than he himself was. He rejoiced in the remark that one of the singers at the opera had made—that a certain effect in the "Francs-Juges" was the most *terrible* thing he had ever heard. His ecstasy was so great that for a time he forgot that he had ar-

ranged the concert expressly to bring himself before the notice of the beautiful English actress. Miss Smithson remained indifferent to his homage, and he was heartbroken when he had descended from his seventh heaven and noticed the fact. He grew melancholy, and took to wandering in the fields around Paris at night. Liszt and Chopin, who were then both in the capital, followed him about all one night in the plain of Saint-Denis, fearing that he would try to kill himself.

In June of 1828, while he was planning an opera on the story of Virginius, his conduct was wilder than ever before. His nerves caused him constant pain. He dashed out one morning from his apartment and walked to Villeneuve Saint-Georges, and back, more than twenty miles, just to unstrain his nerves. Then he wrote a long letter to Ferrand, describing his emotions: "Oh! how lonely I am! All my muscles tremble like those of a dying man! O my friend, send me some work: send me a bone to gnaw! How beautiful the fields are! What abundant light! All the living people whom I saw on the road during my walk looked so happy! The trees trembled softly, and I was all alone in the immense plain. . . . Space, forgetfulness, sorrow, rage, surrounded me one by one. Oh! despite all my efforts, life is escaping from me: I only hang on to it by the shreds!" Among his enemies he was accounted a madman. In 1829, while struggling with poverty, he made a supreme effort to reach his heart's idol, and succeeded in placing his pretensions before her. But she was alarmed at his extraordinary behavior, and her family took care to keep her out of his sight. Miss Smithson went to Holland to play Ophelia for the Dutchmen, and Berlioz, in despair, wrote to Ferrand: "All my hopes were frightful illusions. She has gone, and as she went—without pity for my anguish, which she witnessed for two whole days—she left me only this answer to my suit, 'Nothing could be more impossible.'"

But now his reputation began to grow with wonderful rapidity. From Germany and England came flattering testimonials to his greatness. At the Institute he could make no headway; the masters would not accept his innovations. Boieldieu said to him: "My dear boy, you had the prize in your hand, and now you have thrown it away. I came to the trial with the firm conviction that you would get the prize; but, when I heard your music—! How can you expect me to give a prize for music concerning which I have not the slightest idea? I don't understand one half of Beethoven, and yet you wish to go further than Beethoven has gone!" Boieldieu was honest in his lack of appreciation, and he added, in the kindest manner: "Come and see me often; I

"study you." At this made Berlioz rage terribly. Auber said to him: "You are afraid of the commonplace; but, my dear friend, there is not the slightest danger in your case of that; therefore the best advice that I can give you is to try to write in an ordinary manner, and, when you have produced something which you will consider horribly flat, the chances are that it will be about right." The impassioned Hector laughed this counsel to scorn. "Now, why," he said, "if they wish us to write for bakers and seamstresses, do they give us such subjects as the death of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, and her dying meditations?"

What with the pangs of his despised love, his poverty, and his ambition, Berlioz led a terribly wearing life. His friend Ferrand founded a review, and employed him as musical critic. Berlioz wrote well, and was fond of biting criticism. His articles on Gluck, Spontini, and Beethoven, were full of admiration; but, when he attacked an enemy, he was almost imprudent in his rage. In the spring of 1830 he heard that the fair Miss Smithson, who had returned to London from her long continental tour, did not appear insensible to the addresses of certain persons who besieged her with their passions. He flew into violent rage, overturned his idol and shattered it, and wrote his "Symphonie Fantastique," into which he wove his love, his despair, his disappointment, his frenzy, with masterly skill. This strange creature, who seemed made of fire and dew, wrote best when he suffered most. He proposed to bring out the symphony at the Théâtre des Nouveautés, with an orchestra of two hundred and twenty musicians. He became so excited in writing the "Witches' Sabbath," with which the symphony closes, that his friends feared for his reason. Ophelia, conducting the orgies of the infernal crew, personated Miss Smithson. "I think you will be pleased with the plan of my symphony," he wrote to Ferrand. "The vengeance is not too harsh. Yet it is not in a spirit of vengeance that I wrote the 'Witches' Sabbath.' I don't want vengeance. I pity and despise *her*. She is an ordinary woman, dowered with an instinctive genius for expressing that anguish of the human soul which she has never felt, and incapable of conceiving of an immense and noble sentiment like that with which I honored her!"

Berlioz did not bring out his symphony. The theatre was too small for the symphony. The next episode in his life was a passion for Made-moiselle Camille Mooki, who afterward became the wife of Pleyel. He fancied that he loved her, and was anxious to marry her. But now came new successes, and the *grand prix* at the Institute—tardy reward of many and laborious trials.

At last he was to see Italy! But the perverseness and oddity of his disposition led him to say that he would not; *could* not, go to Italy. He wished to give concerts at home, to obtain the consent of his "dear Camille's" parents to marry her. He proposed to write an overture to Shakespeare's "Tempest." He returned to the idea of bringing out the "Symphony" at a monster concert, and, in a letter to Ferrand, dated August 23, 1830, he wrote, in a *postscriptum*, "That unhappy girl, *Smithson*, is here once more. I have not seen her since her return." He carefully avoided her, and devoted himself assiduously to Camille, who had taught him, he said, to understand and to put into music the character of Ariel.

In 1831 Berlioz went to Italy as *prix de Rome*. His heart was filled with love for Camille: he still expressed only pity for Miss Smithson, who had been unlucky in her second trip to Paris, and was on the verge of financial ruin. His parents, who seem to have been fair-weather friends, were kind to him, and he entered Italy as if he had come to conquer it. "His Camille" had promised to write to him daily, but when he reached Rome, where he expected to find a bundle of letters from her, there were none for him. He was wild with grief and passion, and determined to return to France at once. It was in vain that Horace Vernet, who was then the director of the Academy, explained to him that, if he left Italy, he would probably be crossed off from the list of pensioners, and would lose the brilliant opportunities for which he had struggled so hard. He left for the North at once. In Florence he was ill eight days, and from his sick-bed he wrote to Ferrand, "You are the first Frenchman who has given me any sign of life since I entered this garden, peopled with monkeys, which they call *La belle Italie!*" He filled page after page with passionate invectives against the platitudes of modern politics, the feebleness of modern music, and he had sharp words for Italian composers. "Here, in Florence, when I was first passing through the city," he wrote, "I saw an opera called 'Romeo and Juliet,' by a little rogue named Bellini! And the shade of Shakespeare comes not to exterminate this myrmidon! Alas! the dead return not! . . . Then a miserable eunuch named Paccini, has written a 'Vestal'—Licinius was played by a woman. I had just force enough, after the first act, to leave. I pinched myself, to be sure of my identity. . . . I tried in Rome to buy a piece by Weber. The music-dealer said, '*Weber, che cosa è?*' 'Don't you know?' I cried. '*Maestro italiano, francese, ossia tedesco?*' '*Tedesco*,' I answered, as calmly as I could. My man hunted for a long time on his shelves; then, turning around with satisfied

air, he said, 'Nothing by Weber, no such music as that, my dear sir. But, here we have *la Straniera, I Montecchi Capuleti del celeberrimo maestro signor Vincenzo Bellini!*' " And here Berlioz drew a lively picture of the furious manner in which he rushed out of the shop, leaving the dazed Italian repeating "*Weber? Che cosa è?*"

Berlioz received a letter at last, but not from his "dear Camille." It was from her mother, announcing the marriage of her daughter with M. Pleyel. The letter enraged him so that, according to his own confession, he left Florence for Paris, determined to kill first the mother, next the daughter, and third himself. When he reached Genoa, he went to take one of his furious promenades on the ramparts. His foot slipped, and he fell into the Mediterranean. This bath cooled him. When he was fished out, he no longer thought of vengeance. He went on to Nice, and from there determined to return to Rome. At Nice he wrote his overture to "King Lear," and then went back to Rome with his soul in the seventh heaven of artistic delight. His pension as an Academy student had not been taken away from him, probably because the director foresaw that his mad capers would not last long. The composer studied little at Rome. He absorbed Italy into his soul, but he detested Italian music. "The air which I share with these *industriels* of the Academy does not suit my lungs," he wrote to Ferrand; "I try to breathe a better one when I can. I take an old guitar, a gun, some books of ruled paper, and the germ of a great work which I hope to make blossom, and I pop off into the woods."

His head was filled with vast projects. In a letter written a few months after he had returned to Rome, he confided to Ferrand his plan of a colossal oratorio, to be produced at a musical festival given in Paris, either at the Opera or the Pantheon, or in the courtyard of the Louvre. "I must have three or four solo actors, choruses, one orchestra of sixty musicians in front of the stage, and another of two or three hundred behind it, arranged in an amphitheatre." This is the subject which Berlioz proposed to represent with his orchestras and choruses. "Men, arrived at the lowest stage of corruption, give themselves up to every kind of infamy; an anti-Christ governs them despotically; a small number of the just, led by a prophet, rebel against the general depravity. The despot torments them, carries away their women, insults their faith, and, in the midst of an orgy, destroys their holy books. The prophet comes to reproach him for his crimes, and to announce the end of the world and the last judgment. The irritated tyrant casts the prophet into prison, but, while he is

indulging anew in unholy pleasures, he is surprised at a festival by the terrible trump of resurrection. The dead leave their tombs, the living utter cries of anguish and fright, the world crumbles, angels cry from the clouds—and this will form the *finale* of the musical drama. We shall have, as you can readily see, to employ entirely new means. Besides the orchestras, we must have four groups of brass instruments at the four cardinal points of the place. The combinations will all be new. . . . Not much recitative—few *airs seuls*." And so he wrote on dozens of pages, sketching his colossal improvisations. They remind one of Rubens at his best.

In November of 1832 Berlioz returned to France, a special authorization of Horace Vermet allowing him to depart from Rome six months before the expiration of the customary two years sojourn. He hastened to Paris. At Lyons he went to the Grand Theatre, where he "felt a profound and painful emotion in hearing, in an ignoble ballet, an ignoble orchestra play a fragment of the 'Pastoral Symphony' of Beethoven." Once back in the capital, he felt lonely and oppressed. The critics had ceased to speak of him. He was impatient to reconquer fame. While he was organizing a concert at which he proposed to produce his monodrama of "Lelio," a kind of sequel to the "Symphonie Fantastique," he one day found himself face to face with the fair Miss Smithson. The Ophelia of his early adoration was returning from a professional tour in the North of Europe. She had been unlucky, and was likely to continue so in Paris. Berlioz felt all his old love come back with vehemence. Mutual friends so arranged matters that Miss Smithson attended the concert given by Berlioz in December of 1832, and the "Symphony" was produced on that occasion. She at once recognized the fact that she was the Ophelia of this strange, magnificent production. At last she consented to receive his addresses. She was a virtuous and good woman, and the tender charm which enveloped her had a soothing effect on Berlioz's stormy nature. While the fiery composer was in the full strength of his impetuous courtship, the actress fell and broke one of her legs. She was obliged to retire from the stage, and was harassed with debts. She repelled his advances, doubtless because she feared to burden him. Her family and his family endeavored to dissuade them from marrying. She tried to send him away for ever; he poisoned himself before her very eyes, and was saved only by miraculous skill. Finally she gave her heart to him, and in October of 1833 they were married. After their marriage she told him of the scandals which had been sent her concerning him—that he had epileptic fits—that

She was mad, etc. She loved him well, but he frightened her. "My dear Humbert," wrote Berlioz to his friend some time after his marriage, "Henriette is a delicious creature. She is Ophelia's very self: not Juliet; she has not Juliet's passionate temperament; she is tender, sweet, and *timid*. I have never imagined such impressionability as she possesses, but she has no musical education; and, would you believe it? she even likes to hear certain bits of Auber's nonsense!" It is unpleasant to be compelled to relate that years afterward Berlioz gave his wife such good cause for jealousy that a separation was rendered necessary. But in the early days of his married life he was entirely faithful to her. He labored to help pay her debts. He gave concerts at the Théâtre-Italien for this purpose. It was at the second of these concerts that Paganini first saw him. The great artist was so charmed that he asked Berlioz forthwith to write him an alto solo. Berlioz did this with only partial success, and subsequently made the solo the basis of "Harold in Italy."

The years between 1833 and 1840 were years of incessant toil for Berlioz. The development of the opera of "Benvenuto Cellini" began in 1834, and absorbed the composer's attention. The "Symphonie Fantastique" was published under the direction of Liszt, and was bitterly attacked by critics who were incompetent to read even its alphabet. In May of 1835 Berlioz chronicles the fact that he has begun "an immense work entitled 'Funereal Musical Offering to the Memory of the Illustrious Sons of France.'" From time to time he was in relations with the Director of the Grand Opera, but that worthy always found means to set aside his projected works on the ground that they were too risky. In April of 1836 he wrote to Ferrand, "Every poet in Paris, from Scribe to Hugo, has offered me operatic librettos; it is only the stupid *canaille* of directors who hindered me from getting on." The government from time to time gave Berlioz some proof of its approval. The Minister of the Interior ordered a requiem of him for the anniversary of the melancholy Fieschi attempt. At Leipzig the "Francs-Juges" began to make its way. The "Requiem," produced at the Invalides in 1837, was an electric success. It brought Berlioz into such popular favor that the administration of the Opera reluctantly consented to produce his "Benvenuto Cellini."

And here began a new series of vexations, disappointments, and troubles. Rich in all the elements of a durable work of art as was "Benvenuto Cellini," it was remorselessly hissed by the public, led on by the critics who hated Berlioz, both because he was an innovator, and be-

cause he was a contributor to a ministerial journal—the "Débats." This misfortune almost broke the composer's heart, and placed him in cruel financial embarrassment, as he had relied upon "Benvenuto" to mend his broken fortunes. In this strait, M. Ernest Legouvé, who had known him in Italy, came to his aid. Berlioz was slowly recovering his courage when he one morning received an enthusiastic letter from Paganini, telling him to persevere. A folded paper fell from the epistle to the floor; Berlioz took it up and opened it, to find that it was a check on the house of Rothschild for twenty thousand francs. This generous deed of Paganini's, added to M. Legouvé's help, enabled Berlioz to devote himself with renewed energy to his favorite topics. In seven months he completed the superb symphony of "Romeo and Juliet," which he dedicated gratefully to Paganini. Every moment that he could spare from composition he devoted to the defense of "Benvenuto" and his other completed works. "That which the critics call my system," he wrote to Ferrand, "is none other than that of Weber, Gluck, and Beethoven." And here he added a detail or two which show the extreme care with which he worked. "I wrote an overture to 'Rob Roy,' which seemed to me to be bad after it was brought out: I burned it. I then finished a solemn mass, the *ensemble* of which I judged to be inferior: I burned that also. There were three or four bits in our opera of the 'Francs-Juges' which I destroyed for the same reason. But, when I tell you that that score is filled with all the qualities which give vitality to a work of art, you may, and I am sure you will, believe me. The same may be said of the score of 'Benvenuto Cellini.'"

M. Legouvé, who so kindly came to the aid of Berlioz, when the composer was ill and poor, after the failure of "Benvenuto," has given a spirited account of the manner in which he first made the acquaintance of the eccentric genius. He had heard him much talked of, during a visit to Rome, at the academy from which Berlioz had just departed, and where he had left the reputation of a man who prided himself on his eccentricity. M. Legouvé took a letter of introduction from the wife of Horace Vernet to Berlioz, and on his return to Paris hunted for him in vain for a long time. But one day, being in the shop of an Italian barber, he heard some one say, "M. Berlioz has left his cane." Legouvé committed his letter of introduction to the barber's care, to be handed to Berlioz. That evening he attended the performance of the "Freischütz" at the Opera, and, just as Gaspard was in the middle of his famous *ritournelle*, a gentleman sitting near Legouvé sprang up, and shouted

to the orchestra, "Not two flutes, wretches! Not two flutes! Oh, the brutes!" Then he sank back into his seat, overcome with rage at the error in the orchestration, and entirely unconscious of the excitement which his remarks had created. "I turned around," said M. Legouvé, "and saw not far from me a young man, trembling with anger, his hands clenched, his eyes sparkling—and his hair! Hair? no—it was rather an immense umbrella of a hirsute nature, which overhung an enormous nose, like the beak of a bird of prey. The face was both comical and diabolical. . . . Next morning I heard a ring at my door, went to open it, and I had no sooner seen my visitor than I said, 'Sir, were you not at the "Freischütz" last evening?' 'I was.' 'In the second gallery?' 'Yes.' 'Was it not you who cried out to the orchestra?' 'Of course. Did you ever hear of such savages? They don't know the difference between—' 'Then you are Berlioz?' 'I am.'" An intimacy sprang up at once. "Everything," said M. Legouvé, "our ages, our taste, our common love for the arts, brought us together. We both belonged to what Prévault called the 'tribe of the pathetic.' Berlioz adored Shakespeare, as I did; I worshiped Mozart, as he did; when he was not composing music, he was reading verses; when I was not making verses, I was composing music. And, as the greatest bond between us, I had enthusiastically translated 'Romeo and Juliet,' and he was desperately enamored of Miss Smithson, the great actress who played Juliet." Eugene Sue, Berlioz, and Legouvé frequently sat up all night, discussing their plans for the future, and Berlioz often made the other members of the trio tremble at the vehemence of his sentiments.

Eccentricity can scarcely be regarded as a serious blemish of character, and it did Berlioz no harm to be known as an oddity while he was fighting his early battles. After his marriage with Miss Smithson he was less romantic in action, and, before he began his triumphal tour through the various countries to which he was called, little was left of his old manner except his incapacity to control his emotion when excited by music. He would weep like a child over the successful performance of one of his own works. In 1840 he began, in Belgium, the series of journeys which lasted until his death in 1869. He was far from happy in these years; his separation from his first wife caused him much pain, and, in his declining years, the death of the son who was a pledge of her affection caused him bitter anguish. He was married a second time, to a good and sensible woman, who knew as little of his extraordinary nature as he knew of the practical world. Her sudden death in 1862 was a great blow to him.

He spent a portion of his time in penning long condemnations of the Government for its neglect of himself and other men of genius. The applause of the stranger was doubtless sweeter to him than it would have been had he had ampler recognition at home. "You have probably heard," he wrote to Ferrand in 1841, "of the *spaventoso* success of my 'Requiem' in St. Petersburg. It was given entire at a concert arranged by the Lyric theatre, at the Chapel of the Czar, aided by a chorus of two regiments of the Imperial Guard. The performance, as directed by Henri Bomberg, is said to have been of *incredible majesty*. In spite of the pecuniary dangers of the enterprise, this brave Bomberg, thanks to the generosity of the Russian nobility, made five thousand francs profits. Commend me to despotic governments for the arts! If in Paris I should try to bring out the 'Requiem' according to its merits, I should lose more than Bomberg has made." At another time he wrote, bitterly, "If I get old and incapable, they will make me director of the Conservatory. But, so long as I am valid, I must not dream of such a thing." His journeys to Russia between 1842 and 1847 were very successful; he spoke of his reception as "imperial." When he was about to leave for England in 1847, he wrote to Ferrand; "France is becoming more and more *bête* about music, and, the *more I see of foreign lands, the less I love my own country*. Forgive the blasphemy, but art is dead in France, ay, and putrefied! So one must go where it is. It appears that a singular revolution has taken place in the musical sense of the English nation within the last ten years."

His heart was very sore at the outrageous treatment of the "Damnation de Faust" by French critics and public. He went down to his grave convinced that his countrymen would never do him justice. But scarcely two years after his death the "Damnation de Faust" enjoyed a popularity in France which has been accorded to the works of few French composers. In Germany, in 1853, the "Faust" was acclaimed as one of the greatest works of the age. Berlioz wrote to Ferrand of the "delirium" of the public at Brunswick; at Baden the number of listeners was immense; in some towns ladies kissed the composer's hands as he left the theatres. In Hanover the king and queen sat four hours at a concert, and the poor blind king cried out, "What a director you are! I can not *see* you, but I can *feel* you direct!" From 1856 to 1858 Berlioz labored on the opera of "The Trojans," which he intended for his master-piece. "I don't know, Ferrand," he wrote, "what will become of this immense work, which for the moment has not the least chance of representation. The Opera is in disorder. It has become a kind of private

theatre of the Emperor, where only the works of persons who are adroit at slipping into his favor can be represented. The work is done; I have written it with a passion which you will quite understand, you, who also admire the great Virgilian inspiration." A short time afterward he wrote: "The Emperor cares too little for music to interfere directly and energetically. I shall have to submit to the ostracism which that insolent theatre (the Opera) has always inflicted, without knowing why, on certain masters, such as Mozart, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Weber, Beethoven, who all would have been glad to write for the Opera of Paris, but could never obtain that honor. After all, what does it matter? The work exists, and, as Clio says in the epilogue, '*Stat Roma.*' It will be known one day. But to be compelled to put up with the insolence of idiots!" In 1861 "The Trojans" was received at the Opera by the director, but the Minister of State was the authority on whom its representation depended. The Minister of State was Count Walewski, who was angry with Berlioz because he had refused to direct the rehearsals of "Alceste." "I had declined that honor," said Berlioz, "because of the transpositions necessary in order to fit the rôle to the voice of Madame Viardot. Such a course was irreconcilable with the opinions which I had professed all my life. I am therefore not in favor at court. But the musical world of Germany and Paris admits that I am in the right." All this time Berlioz was very ill, and his lack of success with "The Trojans" increased his illness. One evening, at the Tuileries, the Empress asked him when she was to have the pleasure of hearing "The Trojans." Berlioz answered very sharply, "I don't know, madame; but I begin to think that one must live a hundred years to get anything produced at the Opera!" After many more unsuccessful efforts, he withdrew "The Trojans" from the Grand Opera, and gave it to the Lyrique, where it was brought out in November, 1863. Berlioz was at first delighted with its apparent success; but in 1866 he writes, sorrowfully, "It would have been better for me to have written one of Offenbach's villainies!" In Germany, meantime, the triumph of Berlioz continued. The composer chronicles a "furious emotion," which he felt when, at Lowenberg, the orchestra of the Prince of Hohenzollern executed his symphony of "Romeo

and Juliet," "and the leader, sobbing, cried out in French, 'No, no, no, there is nothing finer!' Then the whole orchestra rose, and made a thunderous noise of instruments, an immense applause. . . . It seemed to me that I saw in the air the serene face of Shakespeare, and I wanted to cry out to him, 'Father, are you content?'" The opera of "Beatrice and Benedict" was also highly successful at Baden, Weimar, and in other German towns. In France, to-day it is comparatively unknown, but M. Gounod predicts for it a wide popularity in the future.

Berlioz heard with delight of the success of "Harold" in New York in 1864. "What has got into the heads of these Americans?" he wrote to Ferrand. In 1867, just before his visit to Russia, the last triumphal journey that he ever made, he chronicled an offer made him by an American *impresario* to pass six months in America. The sum offered as compensation was one hundred thousand francs. But he did not dare to undertake so long a journey. His health was thoroughly shattered by his incessant labors, excitements, and disappointments. He was lodged in a palace in Russia, and treated with the utmost care, but the fatigue there, nevertheless, so wore upon him that, when he returned to Paris, Nélaton, whom he consulted, told him that he had not long to live. Until March 8, 1869, when he died, he was a martyr to nervous disease. One or two French towns gave festivals in his honor, and crowned him with laurels, but their homage came too late. Paris gave him a magnificent funeral, and then forgot him for ten years. Now she is at last awakening to a proper appreciation of his great genius.

Berlioz was an egotist. A careful perusal of the intimate correspondence which he maintained for half a century with M. Ferrand establishes that fact. But he has given the world a vast volume of wonderful music—inspired, passionate, profound harmonies—which will last as long as civilization lasts. There are spots upon his career, as there are spots upon the sun. But we may charitably say of him, as he said of Spontini, "The temple may perhaps be unworthy of the Deity which inhabits it, but the Deity is always deity." We bow at the shrine of Berlioz's genius, without bestowing too critical attention upon the marks of storm and time which stain the shrine.

EDWARD KING.

HANDEL AND BACH.

ADAPTED FROM THE GERMAN.

I.

TWO of the great dead—long dead in more than one sense to the German people—have risen and again wander over their native soil. Far from his country and kindred, in Westminster Abbey, near England's kings and naval heroes, but greater honor far, near Shakespeare and Milton, sleeps George Frederick Handel, the barber's son, the singer of "The Messiah." By strangers the stranger was understood; among them he lived, while his own nation consigned him to forgetfulness; and today, in the Crystal Palace and Exeter Hall, as his Halleluiah Chorus peals forth the people rise from their seats in honor of God and of the master to whom Heaven gave the power to sing such songs.

The other sleeps in the Saint John's churchyard at Leipsic. No stone or cross marks the grave of him who sang so incomparable a requiem to his Lord. A faded leaf in the church archives bears this simple inscription: "Died, a man sixty-seven years old, Herr John Sebastian Bach, Cappellmeister and Cantor of the school. Was buried from the hearse, July 30, 1750."

The rector of the Saint Thomas school, in his annual programme, is as silent concerning him as if no Bach had ever lived or died. After his death, his widow sold as old copper the plates containing his music for the sum of thirty thalers.

Admired by thousands for his wonderful improvisations upon the organ and piano, but in his best efforts understood by few, with the play of his cunning fingers his remembrance died. The Cantor of the St. Thomas school, a grave,

strange man in a great peruke, whose powerful fugues swelled through that ancient church, but of whose wonderful genius none dreamed, was known to many but appreciated by no living soul. There was a time when the mention of the names of Bach or Handel would waken a smile among professional musicians.

It is now far otherwise. At Halle and Leipsic monuments have been erected to both; among musical productions Handel's oratorios occupy the first place, and since that memorable evening of the 12th of March, 1829, when Mendelssohn, in the musical academy of Berlin, brought forward for the first time in a century, amid the plaudits of the astonished multitude, the "St. Matthew's Passion," this immortal production of the Leipsic Cantor, has become familiar to the musical world. The noblest monument to both Handel and Bach is the late editions of their works in a form possible only to German industry and cultivation.

In this musical revolution, this bringing of the dead to life, Mozart and Beethoven had also a share. Through their recognition, but more through spiritual relationship, Mozart to Handel, Beethoven to Bach, the musical ear of the present was opened to the past. The incomparable service of Beethoven is, that without envy he recognized the greatness of both, and brought it to the light. One must have served under a strange yoke, and devouring the crumbs from a strange table, have thought weeping of the riches of his father's house, before he can understand Handel's song of freedom; he must have turned from the "ways of Nazareth" to the unspotted Lamb of God before he can appreciate Bach's passion-songs. That the German people have again ear and heart for both great masters, is an evidence not only of musical, but of spiritual progress.

Handel and Bach were born not alone for art. In Hauptmann's words, "The best in art is not alone for artists, but for humanity." In their oratorios they speak to men from the Holy Scriptures; they become exponents of God's truth, and place themselves among the great cloud of witnesses for Christ. In the wonderful language bestowed on them, they declare the mighty works of the Most High. For all harmony culminates at last in that great harmony, the reconciliation of God with men; "God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." From this grand idea comes the joy, the triumph, the repose of their music, to which one listens oblivious of the cares and sorrows of mortal life. In a godless generation they stood as witnesses for the truth; for a great master's mission is a higher one than merely to delight and refresh by his music. From this grander side we propose to review the life and work of these two great men.

The position of the world, and particularly of Germany, during the first half of the century following the thirty years' war—the time from 1680 to 1750, during which the life and works of both these great masters were wrought out—is not unknown to the reader. To many it is a time of pitch-black darkness, of dead orthodoxy, of aristocratic tyranny, and the degradation of the people—to others it appears in the rosy light of a new illumination. The truth lies between these two ideas. It was a time of twilight, in which the beams of day yet struggled with the shadows of night. The after-pains of the thirty years' war were still felt; spiritually many hearts were bleeding, and many sacred possessions consumed as by fire.

Germany's political *role* was at an end; the nation was dead and buried, and the grave-digger's occupation was gone. Upon the throne of France sat Louis XIV, through his emissaries, and still more through his principles of State, through the frivolity, heartlessness, and sensuality of his court ruling the world. To Paris, as to the high-school of politics and galantry, rushed the sons of the German princes, and diseased in body, but more diseased in soul, each returned to his small domain, carrying with him that Satanic axiom, "*L'état c'est moi.*" It was the age of Augustus the Strong in Saxony, of Max Immanuel in Bavaria, of Eberhard Louis in Wurtemberg. The *few* reveled in all this world can offer of wealth, and power, and grandeur; the *many* were as the dust beneath their feet. To the general oppression one court only offered an exception, that of the great Elector, afterward Frederick William I.

This was the time when French arrogance

and German impotence culminated, when the Edict of Nantes was revoked, when that priceless ruby, Alsace, and that stronghold, Strassburg, were torn from the imperial crown of Germany. The bridge between the cultivated and the uncultivated was complete. Not as a Cassandra, but as a courtier, literature gives the history of that day. Swelling with bombast, cumbered with all the languages of Babel, hypocritical and untrue to nature, it filled the lands with beatbenish gods, wrote State romances, Chinese and Indian war and love stories. Matheson, in this age, dared to write to a prince, "If God were not God, who deserves to be so more than your princely grace?" Only one man, through the mists of the future, saw the coming deluge of the French Revolution, and this man was Leibnitz, the philosopher.

And the Church? Piety was not extinct, and decided witnesses for the truth still lived, but in dangerous places. The freshness of the times of the Reformation had passed. The preaching was learned and polemical, yet savorless—full of worldly ideas and crafty superstitions. "They would rather," sighs Valentine Andrea, "comprehend than reverence the Trinity; rather prove the living presence of Christ in the sacrament than adore him above all; rather write of repentance over sin than feel it; rather set forth the efficacy of good works than do good works." No wonder that, repelled by stubborn orthodoxy on the one hand, and false piety on the other, men took refuge in infidelity.

In such an age, what was holiest and truest in art could find but little recognition. Still, above the preposterous secular poetry of the day, toned the pure melody of sacred song—song laden with the highest joys and deepest sorrows of humanity—the hymns of Neumark, of Flemming, of the Princess Louise Henrietta, and, above all, of Paul Gerhard.

And, such as it was, music flourished. Every little court had its orchestra. In Italy was its blossoming time, its Raphaelitish period—the day of Scarlatti, Durante, Leonardo Leo, and others of like renown. From Italy came that siren, whose strength lies all in gold, destined to absorb the national poetry and genius—the Opera. In Germany, at this period, there was great musical fecundity. Simplicity and affectation, provincialism and cosmopolitanism, piety and frivolity, orthodoxy and infidelity, roughness and cultivation, seemed equally blended. But in this enervated, denationalized Germany, amid the decay of true musical science from the ranks of the common people, the inheritors of its best and most honest blood, arose two men, uniting in themselves whatever of fullness, depth,

strength, and simplicity yet remained—two musical witnesses to all time against their day and generation—George Frederick Handel and John Sebastian Bach.

II.

In our day we do not receive the work of a great master as a meteor fallen direct from heaven, but, as the culmination of a long series of patient efforts, the outgrowth of powers developed by careful study and discipline. The more we come to know men, the more we recognize in their artistic creations the results of severe discipline and unremitting labor than the divine spark of genius. Upon a careful review of the lives of Handel and Bach, we find that, in them, brilliant genius and thorough cultivation combine in about equal measure.

At Halle, February 23, 1685, to the court barber, Handel, a highly respected, honorable man, a son was born. This son was the child of his declining years. The mother, who regarded it as a special favor from Heaven that she derived her birth from the clergy, was a strictly orthodox, serious woman. The father wished to train his son for the law, but the boy, very early, showed an uncontrollable love for music. In his seventh year he played the organ, to the surprise and delight of all, and in his twelfth he gave, at Berlin, such proofs of his musical skill that the Italian court musicians were filled with envy. After this great success his father allowed him to prosecute the science of music in connection with his legal studies. He soon went to Hamburg, found a place in the orchestra, and ere long came forth with an opera of his own composition which awakened the jealousy of his associates. At length, weary of the constant persecution of his masters, and the envy of his fellow pupils, he gathered up his few worldly possessions and went to Italy, where he hoped to be better appreciated, and also to improve his narrow circumstances. Here he was joyfully received, and moved among the great as their equal. A Protestant among priests and cardinals, in the midst of brilliant feasts, he wrote his first oratorio, which was a solemn protest against the rushing frivolous life around him.

After thus showing what he could do, he sat down a diligent student at the feet of Scarlatti, from whom he learned the deeper mysteries of the musical art. Then, turning a deaf ear to the siren voices that lured him to remain in the sunny south, he crossed the Alps, kissed his old mother, and, in obedience to an urgent call, went to Hanover. From there he passed over to England on a visit, and, feeling that country to be his true home, a place with room enough

for him, and where he might forget his menial servitude, he, at a second visit, made it his permanent home. Here he soon wrote the "*Te Deum*," and could only appease the angry Elector of Hanover, who, to his misfortune, afterward became king of England by his magnificent martial music.

In silent retirement he wrote his anthems, and not until thirty-five years of age did he appear before the people and take the helm of musical affairs. Nine years of entire musical supremacy covered this brilliant but dangerous period. Then a dark cloud, which had been slowly gathering, burst over his head. The national pride of England rebelled against the stranger, the rivals whom he had so widely distanced, and the increasing influence of the French upon taste, raised up an army of intrigues against this solitary man. It was the struggle of musical idealism against musical materialism, and the latter carried the day against Handel. Beset by enemies, and forsaken by his friends, his strength consumed in the unequal conflict, with a broken spirit he took refuge in Aachen. But from that place of healing he came forth a renewed man, to whom fall had proved resurrection. With a strength never before dreamed of the giant arose, no more to serve the false deities of his time, but the living God.

In his great oratorio he had found a language that should silence envy. Honored and revered by all, he again stood in the Haymarket Theater, and from that stage over which mock heroes had so often trod, swelled the noble song of the Messiah and his salvation. The great musician had become blind, and with tears streaming from his sightless eyes he accompanied the oratorio. Still blinded, he wrote "*Jephthah*." Upon the week of Palm Sunday he died. His wish to die on Good Friday, and to rise with his Lord and Savior, was granted. With his great means he shortly before his death founded a charitable institution, and he obtained, at last, a place in Westminster Abbey among the nation's most honored dead.

Handel's life was like a powerful rushing stream, but its end was peace. If a full life be to love, to hate, to enjoy, to suffer, to win, to lose, then his life was complete. He had much to do with the great ones of the earth, but was ruled by none. Whoever saw him at the Haymarket Theater, around him not only the common people, but the princes and great ones of the nation—whoever saw him in that vast assembly, with his high, broad forehead, his arched brows, the powerful neck that bore the head upright, recognized in him a born king of men,

whose red robe was as the royal purple, whose scepter was the *baton*, whose subjects were all the lovers of majestic harmony and high musical art, whose *Magna Charta* was the WORD OF GOD.

III.

Away from the palaces of the great, at Eisenach, March 21, 1685, a month after the birth of Handel, John Sebastian Bach was born. It is pleasant to contemplate Bach's family tree. Driven from Hungary on account of their faith, they, a family of musicians, had come to Thuringia. In the course of the century, from 1626 to 1726, one hundred masculine Bachs were born. Often, on some joyful family day, they, all the Bachs, would assemble and refresh their souls with music. The little Sebastian learned music of his older brother. After the death of this brother, fully orphaned, he went to Luneburg, where, with his clear, soprano voice, he sang to gain the means of instruction on the organ and piano. The boy then wandered on foot to Hamburg to hear Reinken, the renowned organist. On the way home Heaven, as through a miracle, kept this child from starvation.

At the death of a cousin he succeeded to his place as organist at Armstadt, with a salary of sixty thalers a year. Although he at length learned to play to the edification of the multitude, he, in the beginning, confounded all who heard him. Having obtained a short leave of absence he went to Lubec, and there, entranced with the organ playing of a great master, he forgot when his furlough expired, and lost his place in consequence. Soon after he married a relative, and went to Muhlhausen, which place he quitted on receiving a call to Weimar. From Weimar, where, "to the honor of the Lutheran Zion," he wrote his cantata, "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott," he was summoned to Anhalt as concert director. Returning to Anhalt from a short journey he found his wife dead. Seeking to divert his mind from its sorrow, he again set out on his travels, taking with him his eight children.

He married a second time, and wrote for his bride a little music-book with preludes, sonnets, and love verses. From this marriage came thirteen children, but still the true wife found time with her sons, Friedmann and Emmanuel, to take music lessons of the husband and father. Bach ere long went to Hamburg, seeking a place in the St. Catharine Church. Here, at a great centennial festival, he played so wonderfully from his own "Inundation of Babylon," that a musical Simeon broke out in these words: "I had thought such art long since dead, but as it still lives I can depart in peace." Bach lost the

place through intrigue, but nothing daunted he went home, still joyful in his divine art. After a long struggle he became Cantor of the Saint Thomas School at Leipsic.

Now the bird so long tempest-tossed had found its nest. A good salary, a giant work, the favor of a select few, consoled him for the hatred of would-be rivals. During his leisure hours he wrote his passion and Christmas oratorios. Summoned to Sans Souci, he played before Frederick the Great, and was loaded with honors; but not at all lifted up by royal and courtly favor, he returned home and resumed his work. He rejoiced without envy in the gifts of others, but a false note from his organist, Gorner, would throw him into such a passion that he would tear off his peruke, and hurl it at the poor fellow's head, with the words: "You had better been bred a cobbler!" Still, despite such little outbursts of temper as this, he was a good man, just to his fellows, and upright before God. Having become blind by overtaking his eyes in engraving his music upon copper-plates, he yet wrote in the darkness his magnificent motetto, "When we were in the deepest need." Just before his death his eyesight returned. A stroke of apoplexy ended his life on the 28th of July, 1750. His family was left in poverty, and his grave is among the many unnumbered and unknown ones in the St. John Church-Yard at Leipsic.

Bach's life flowed on peacefully as that of a patriarch, and yet it was a passion soothed by a happy domestic life and by his divine art. A servant of God, a servant of men, without being any man's servant, one of the meekest and most spiritual, as well as one of the most wonderful of men, he avoided those the world called great without flying from them, and whatever was the cross which life laid upon him he bore it with patience.

One should have seen him at his seat before the organ in the Saint Thomas Church, where all the tones of the world of spirits seemed to wander through his soul, around him, his pupils, below, the listening congregation, or at home seated at the piano, his music-loving wife and ten sons looking up to him with pride and reverence, and listening with rapt ear to the strains which they, of all the world, most fully appreciated. Whoever looked on Bach in his plain black dress, his head somewhat bent to one side, the heavy yet artistically penciled brows, the dark eyes breaking like fire from a cliff, saw the proud representative of that noble, unsophisticated citizen, who, true to himself, moved through the corruption of the eighteenth century, uncontaminated by the vices of the great,

and proof against the leveling, debasing tendencies of an artistic life.

Handel and Bach never met. Near together as they were placed by birth, and closely allied as they were by art, yet they were far removed in life. In their oratorios we see the reflex of their life-leadings and impressions. The oratorio, at first a kind of moral, allegorical, or melodrama, received through Handel's appropriation of Bible subjects its true dignity and import. Handel's oratorios, in their Scripture order, are as follows: Joseph, Israel out of Bondage, Joshua, Deborah, Samson, Jephthah, Saul, Solomon, Athaliah, Belshazzar, Esther, Judas Maccabeus, and the Messiah.

History, the dealings of God with men, is their great theme. From the old heathen mythology, the Indian and Chinese allegories, the rose water pastorals of the day, he leads us into the fresh tide of grand and sacred history—from painted deception to truth, from the half savagery of a corrupt civilization, to the true man, with true feelings and brave deeds. Thus Shakespeare invaded the kingdom of history, making its great heroes and greater truths his own. But Handel went still deeper. Israel's history is not the history of the Jews. It is God's history in the world, and with the world, and, therefore, typical of the history of every individual. The bringing forward of such subjects, the lifting up of these long-forgotten yet imperishable truths of God, was a blow in the face of that trifling, affected age. It was the protest of true religion against the idle creeds of men, the speech of a prophet, whose words were not sharp needles or insidious daggers, but fire and hammer to break the living rock.

What significance Handel's music must have had to the people of England, just emerging from their struggle with the faithless Stuarts, and fighting for political and religious freedom! The people, whose Puritan fathers had gone to battle singing psalms, must have understood Handel's battle cry, "Up! blow the trumpets!" and the aria of Simeon, "Up, Lord of hosts!"

"For the salvation of thy people,
For the truth and right,
Hear us, O Jehovah,
And show thy might!"

So must have toned upon their ears the cries of distress in Israel out of Bondage, and the endless joy in that strain, "The horse and the rider, he hath thrown into the sea!" As in this oratorio, the call for freedom becomes holy, because the struggle is for hearth and altar, so, in the Messiah, this idea, apart from all worldly or national considerations, becomes a call for deliverance and redemption in a deeper sense.

Handel's Messiah is no drama, but an *epos*. It is the song of the world-redeemer and the world-conqueror, of the Light of the heathen, the Consolation of Israel, the Lamb of God, the Prince of Peace, the triumphal strain of him who has burst the bars of death, and brought life, light, and freedom. Here the deepest chords of men's hearts are riven. Here culminate all the longings of the soul after redemption. The Messiah, with its imperishable melodies, will no more grow old than the longing for redemption, that inheritance out of our lost paradise.

Compared with the music of his time in Germany, that of Handel was as the blows of a giant to the feeble strokes of a crippled dwarf. To a debased, cringing race, he taught what a man, what a people may be whose strength is in God. His Messiah is a great musical *credo*, in its grand simplicity, laid before an age when the pulpits were silent concerning the Son of God, and spoke only of the Almighty Father, and Jesus, the carpenter's son, of Nazareth.

Handel had many quarrels with his text-books; they did not please him. His best text-book is always the Scriptures, and his best oratorio, as the Messiah, where he follows them alone.

In Handel's music he combines the intellectual characteristics of the three nations, in each of which he passes a portion of his life. From his paternal home he inherited the German virtues of piety, conscientiousness, earnestness, and industry. In Italy he learned form and purity of melody, the power of song, the fire and strength of fancy, fettered in the classic mass. To these he afterward added English independence and love of freedom, and that persistent energy which, in spite of all obstacles, goes straightforward to its goal.

From Handel's oratorios we gather a garland of arias that can never wither, bound together by a cord of incomparable melodies. Who has ever heard a mightier duet than that of the two bass voices in "Israel," "The Lord is a strong hero!" or a more deeply moving aria than that of blind Samson, "Night is around me;" an aria in which one sees sun, moon, and stars go down? What can more affect the heart than that Christmas recitative, "He was despised and rejected of men;" or that crowning one of all, "I know that my Redeemer liveth?"

In his music, substance and form unite like body and soul. Incomparable as he is in his arias, he is no less so in his choruses. Here he is like a skillful general who leads his forces into the field. "Joyful and confident of victory, he moves forward his basses firmly and steadily, and beneath the powerful tread of his columns

the earth trembles." A Titan, he piles mountain upon mountain, and seeks to storm heaven with his tones. He shows that true genius which, with small means, can produce extraordinary effects. Let sixteen voices sing one of Handel's choruses to the accompaniment of the organ, and the effect will be the same as if eighty sang in any other production.

Handel regarded Samson as the greatest of his oratorios, giving it the preference even over the Messiah. We can well understand this, for the theme of Samson is closely woven with the blind master and his career. And he a Samson, full of strength, but forgetful of his great powers, had once made a treaty with that treacherous Delilah, the *Opera*. Though broken for a time in strength, like blind Samson, he was destined at the last to triumph, and with angry might to pull down the pillars of the Philistines.

And thus, in that age of the baseness of the little, and the tyranny of the great, the sensuality and unbelief of the masses, stood Handel in his oratorios, with his fearless, unwavering faith, his moral earnestness and manly strength. Well might Beethoven, upon his death-bed, say: "*In Handel is the truth.*"

IV.

Turning to Bach's oratorios, we at once see their instinctive difference from those of Handel. Bach did not, like Handel, seek his subject; it overpowered him. He had no public before him, longing for new things, and eager to hear new singers. He was a servant of the Church. His originality lies not in the choice, but in the handling of his theme. He tried to make his Church music accord with the service of God, and, through it, to give an echo of the words of prayer or praise.

His cantatas with subjects drawn from the Gospels number one hundred. His passion and Christmas music has its appointed place in the Lutheran service, and no other music of the kind can compare with his. His Saint Matthew's Passion is the most powerful of all his productions of this kind, and the best known.

As Handel's music can be understood only through a knowledge of his career in Italy and England, so Bach can be understood only by those familiar with the German school of music. Joyousness of tone and manner are the characteristics of Italian music; but the old spirit of German art, before all things, strives after character and truth. The words must have their full right; the music must only make them more clear and transparent. To bind words

and manner harmoniously together, like body and soul, is Bach's great effort; and in it he has met with grand success.

The imperishable truth stands higher with him than the intellectual, beautiful form; therefore he dares express the thought with the utmost boldness, sometimes even with harshness. Every melody is characteristic; no one chorus like another. This estranges from him many ears. "Bach is as national as Goethe and Lessing, but not popular as Schiller and Mozart," has been justly said of him.

Bach's music is polyphonic, or many-toned. The ears of many can not bear this. There are people so sluggish in hearing and thinking that they must have every thing perfectly plain in music. Handel can accomplish this, but Bach can not. Every voice forms a part of the great whole, and must stand alone. A chorus of Bach's is a great conversation of voices, where each must be silent when he has nothing to say, and fall in at the right time. Often in the beginning and concluding chorus we are obliged to follow two or three melodies at a time. It has been truly said: "Bach's music is like a primitive forest, full of grotesque growths and gnarled branches. One should not send children into this wood."

Over-pregnant with thought and meaning his music is especially the music of the future; still, amid all its depth, it contains a romantic element, which makes it truly German. Whoever fully drinks in the spirit of his melodies is as under a spell of enchantment. His orchestra, also, is different from Handel's; not only sustaining the music, but standing by it like its twin brother. Sometimes the sentiments are reflected in the voices; at others in the instruments. The orchestra, as well as the voices, can interest of itself. In the beautiful words of Hiller: "The orchestra of the Saint Matthew's Passion is a fine veil, behind which a tear-moistened, but most lovely face, shines forth."

In this fine, spiritual orchestration, this man has indeed followers, but no predecessor. The few instruments are finely chosen, and gently and impressively they move the thought of the aria. In the Saint Matthew's Passion, flutes, harps, and organs have their place, but horns, drums, bugles, and trumpets are not heard. Where Christ speaks, the string quartette usually softly accompanies; but at the words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" even this is silent.

A mysterious power, depth, and spirituality are the signs-manual of Bach's music. It is as if he spoke to us of a better world. He touches

our finest sensibilities. We give him our hand, and he leads us into an intricate labyrinth of tones, but securely we go on by the Ariadne-thread, and our feet stand at last in the Holy Place.

The musical world of the present is full of the praise of John Sebastian Bach. It may not love the seriousness and transcendent depths of his music, but it honors the master whom Beethoven has called "the great father of harmony." Over his nameless and unknown grave many a one whom his strains have edified, in spirit blesses him, and, in the concluding words of his Passion-chorus, says:

"Rest gently, gently rest."

To both Handel and Bach the Scriptures were the undoubted truth of God. No mortal could have written such music had he not believed. To the full measure of their powers they sought to serve and honor Him, but each in his own way. Handel should not be called the more worldly of the two, if the words are to be taken in their usual sense. Like Paul at Athens he preached God from a worldly stage—the living God of history, speaking in deeds and miracles. From the Scriptures he seized whatever would most deeply move the soul, and knew how to present it in the best light. He could sing of the world's allurements and deceits, for he had known them all; and he could compass the whole scale of emotion, from despair to rapture, from the woes of death to the joys of heaven.

From his text he grasps, like Luther, the principal thought, and indelibly impresses it upon the mind of his hearer. He is the singer of the Old Testament, jealous for the Lord's house and honor—an Asaph in the temple-court—his orchestra the whole one hundred and fifty Psalms—his text-book Moses and the prophets—and from the summit of David's mountain he gazes afar to the morning twilight of the great redemption.

Bach is a Church believer, a pious man, who has God always before his eyes and in his heart. Not upon the theater of the world, amid its honors and disgrace, its loves and hates, were unfolded to him the eternal truths of the Scriptures, but in a life of silent, blessed meditation, like that of a hermit in a forest-sanctuary. He was a Lutheran, with an inward leaning toward a monastic life. Not the defiant Luther before the Imperial Diet, but Luther in the narrow cell, resembled Bach. A deep, mystic strain runs through his music, which shows that he—the Lutheran Cantor—was capable of writing a high mass.

The sympathetic element was not wanting in Bach—he, too, could sing of mortal loves, and hates, and passions, but this human sympathy was only the back-ground before which appeared the shining image of his Lord. Not what God does for men with the strong arm, but what God does for men in his love, in his inconceivable condescension, affects his heart. Spiritually to sink himself in this history, to embody its eternal substance in his harmonies, this was Bach's art. To him the smallest passage of the Scriptures is full of meaning. He is not like Handel, a preacher to the multitude; his power is not on the stage or in the concert-hall, but in the Church. If over his utterances the veil of mystery lies, still he explores into a hitherto unexplored kingdom, only to let us know how inexhaustible its treasures are.

His music seems to be ordained not for the people, but for only a consecrated circle. And still this is only seeming. We unjustly call Bach "a solitary artist without a public," because he is too high and too deep for the multitude. He who only says what all understand, will, in the end, have said but very little; and he who says more, will not of necessity be always incomprehensible.

Bach's music is a giant, Gothic dome, in which a forest of mighty pillars of harmony swells upward, their branches crossing and interlacing each other in the most wonderful and intricate forms. Cross and crozier fail not, and through the windows, painted with scenes from sacred history, stream in the broken beams of day. Every uncorrupted nature feels without comprehending the great structure in all its parts, that the spot whereon he stands is holy ground. This is the secret power of Bach's music. It is with this music as with the stars of heaven. The unlearned man feels their greatness and sublimity, but the astronomer who knows their orbits and their course, admires and wonders still more.

Bach is the singer of the New Dispensation. He well knows how to sing of old things; but it is his delight to seek inspiration in the simple majesty of the Gospel, in the deep thoughts of Saint Paul. He knows the Lord as the king, the conqueror over death, and thus he represents him in that cantata for the sixteenth Sunday after Trinity; but still it is the mournful joy of the true Lutheran to stand under the cross of Jesus, to support his weary head, and, with gushing tears, follow him to the sepulcher, softly saying, "My Jesus, good-night!"

In Handel, breaks forth from the burning bush an armed and mantled prophet before all the people; in Bach, a silent priest goes into

the holy of holies to light the candles, and burn incense before the Most High.

Two great masters have stood before our eyes, to comprehend whom in their deepest meaning, it is given only to earnest souls. Handel and Bach have risen from forgetfulness, because in their works lies an eternal truth, which, though it may slumber for a time, can never die. To have brought these great masters from obscurity is an honor to our generation, but may Heaven forbid that to this or any other age they shall be in their music what they once were—witnesses of God against the degeneracy of the time !

THE GREAT MUSICIANS.

HANDEL.—HAYDN.—MOZART.—BEETHOVEN --
BACH—MENDELSSOHN—ROSSINI—AUBER.

PERHAPS in the whole round of employments or professions, not one exercises a more powerful influence on the human mind than that of the musician. The human voice, with its marvelous variety of cadence and intonation, is the grandest of music. It can stir the soul with the deepest emotions for good or for evil. It can subdue the savage or rouse into fury the quiet and peaceable. The well-cultured vocalist is an object of the highest admiration in civilized society. And those numerous contrivances which abound with melody, and under the hand of the skillful performer entrance their auditory, are but mechanical approximations to the production of tones like those of the human voice. But every man or woman is not endowed in a high degree with a fine musical voice or an apt ear for the appreciation of melody. The weak-voiced, however, can find pleasure in extracting sweet sounds from an instrument, and by study and practice become able to interpret the written music of a great composer. A good pianist, violinist, or harpist is an ornament in any society, and we believe that a great part of the refinement and true delicacy of the highest civilization is due to the exalted appreciation of music which is always to be

found in it. In barbarous society we find musical instruments, so called, of the rudest sort; and as we ascend in the scale of human beings, the instruments for producing sounds improve in character and quality.

The cultured musician will give expression to his own character in his productions and performances. As it is said in *New Physiognomy*, "One in whom the devotional and spiritual faculties predominate will give us sacred music; while another, in whom the ideal and the imaginative faculties predominate, will give us something more fanciful and light. The social affections predominating, give us love songs; the executive or propelling faculties in the ascendancy, lead to war songs and martial music. So with those who listen; one appreciates most the sacred, another the sentimental, another the sympathetic, another the social, and another the martial."

In the following group we present a variety of composers and musicians, all of whom are great in the estimation of the world, and to whom society will ever owe a tribute of gratitude for their perfection of the divine art of music.

In Handel we find a broad and deep mentality, with a temperament in sympathy with the emotional and feelingful. His moral nature was strong, and both education and association strengthened his religious tendencies. Hence his music is peculiarly fitted to religious uses, and breathes the spirit of earnest adoration.

In Haydn there is more fire and energy, the product of a nervous temperament and well-marked driving forces. Beethoven had an

earnest, susceptible nature, with strong impulsiveness—a martial nature.

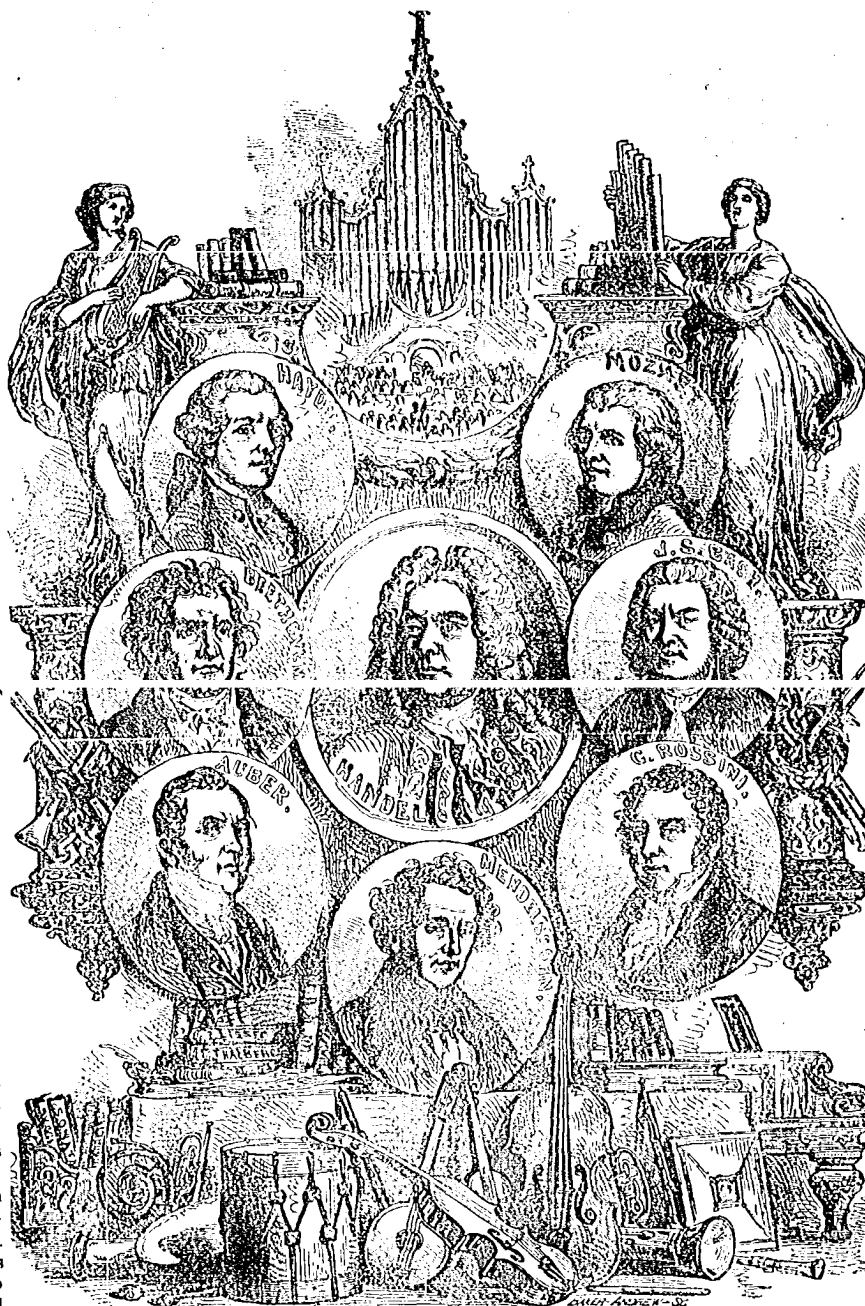
The prominent phrenological characteristics of the others of our group will be found noted in their respective biographies.

born at Halle, Prussian Saxony, February 23, 1685. Though a German by birth, he spent the most of his life in Italy, where, indeed, he gained his reputation.

Manifesting in infancy a decided musical taste, he was placed under a teacher, with whom he remained until thirteen, composing, in the mean time, cantatas for the church service, and learning nearly all instruments, especially the organ. In 1698, a friend of his father took the child to Berlin, and presented him to the Elector, afterward Frederick I., who offered to take charge of his education and send him to Italy. This favor was declined. He returned to Halle, and on the death of his father went to Hamburg in 1703, where he played a violin in the orchestra of the opera. While there he composed his first opera, *Almira*, rapidly followed by *Nero*, *Florinda*, and *Daphne*. From thence he went to Italy, visited Rome and Florence, where he composed *Rodrigo*, his first Italian opera, which had a brilliant success during thirty nights. His *Agrippa*, composed in Venice, had the same success.

In 1710 he returned to Germany, and was appointed chapel master to the Elector of Hanover, afterward George I. Then he went to England, where he was patronized by Queen Anne and the nobility, and there composed *Rinaldo*, *Pastor Fido*, *Thesus*. In 1711 he paid a visit to Hanover, but returned to England in 1712. In 1733 he commenced the composition of his oratorios, *Esther*

being the first, followed by *Isaac*, *Alexander's Feast*, and *Israel in Egypt*, and in 1740, *L'Allegro e Penseroso* and *Saul*. His *Samson* and



PORTRAITS OF THE GREAT MUSICIANS.

HANDEL.

George Frederick Handel, one of the greatest of musical composers and musicians, was

Messiah was also composed in London, for the benefit of the Foundling Hospital. These, from 1749 to 1777, brought the hospital in the sum of £10,000. In 1751, while at work on *Jephtha*, his sight began to fail, and gradually he became blind; and when the work was produced, the grand old composer was led into the orchestra. He still composed and made several additions to his oratorios. The *Messiah*, performed on April 6, 1759, was the last at which the composer was present. Exhausted, he returned home and went to bed, from which he never rose. On the seventeenth anniversary of his first performance of the *Messiah*, a little before midnight (April 13, 1759), he breathed his last, aged seventy-four years and seven weeks. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, and his statue is conspicuous among the monuments of the venerable "Poet's Corner" of that edifice. Among his works were eight German, twenty-six Italian, and sixteen English operas, twenty oratorios, a great quantity of church music, cantatas, songs, and instrumental pieces. He was a wonderful musician, and his compositions were full of grandeur. Alexander Pope called him the "giant Handel" in truth. His compositions were majestic and sublime. He carried the old forms of opera to their highest perfection, and infused a new life and power into English ecclesiastical music. His operas are seldom performed; but his oratorios hold the same place in music that in the English drama is accorded to the plays of Shakspeare; and the Handel Festivals of England, lasting several days, in which thousands of musicians and singers take part, are the grandest musical exhibitions of the age.

HAYDN.

Joseph Haydn was born in Rohrau, Lower Austria, March 31, 1732, and was the eldest of twenty children of Matthias Haydn, a wheelwright, who had some skill in playing the harp, and whose memory was stored with songs. His wife, too, was a singer; and thus young Haydn inherited deep love for music. At five years of age he attracted the attention of a relative, who advised the parents to give their son a musical education. When eight years old he entered the choir of the cathedral of St. Stephen at Vienna. In the following year his voice broke, and he was dismissed by the chorister. His parents were unable to support him; so he took a small garret, where he had neither stove nor fireplace; how he lived no one knew; his worm-eaten harpsichord and his violin were his only solace, and with these he perhaps forgot his hunger. In the same house lived a widow and her daughter. Young Haydn was making merry over his lodgings one day, and telling of his visitors, the snow and the rain. The widow saw his want, and gave him permission to sleep on the floor in her own room during the winter. The offer was thankfully accepted. Some time afterward she fell into extreme want. Haydn was then in fair circumstances, and, remembering her kindness, supported her for thirty years

by a small monthly pension. His position was not very lucrative, but subsequently he was introduced to the celebrated singer Porpora, who employed him to play accompaniments to his singing on the piano. From him Haydn learnt composition; and in the autumn of 1750 he composed his first quartetto for stringed instruments.

From 1751 to 1759 his life was that of a successful music teacher. At the age of 27, a Bohemian, Count Morzin, engaged him as music director and composer. Haydn then resolved to marry the daughter of a hairdresser who had once befriended him. She entered a convent, however, and, urged by gratitude, perhaps, he married her sister. The marriage was not a happy one; she was a sorry match for him, and squandered all his earnings. In 1760, Prince Nicholas Esterhazy, who had seen him and heard his symphonies—a style of composition in which he excels all other composers—placed him at the head of his private chapel, which position Haydn held for nearly thirty years. Esterhazy once conceiving the design of dismissing his band, Haydn composed the famous symphony known as "Haydn's Farewell," for the occasion, in which one instrument after another becomes mute, and each musician, as soon as he has ceased to play, puts out his light, rolls up his music, and departs with his instrument. There was no dismissal then.

In 1790, Haydn accompanied Salomons, the violinist, to London, where his reception was most brilliant. In 1791 and 1792, while there, he composed six of his twelve Grand Symphonies. In the summer of 1792 he returned to Vienna, his fame as the greatest of all living composers—Mozart being dead—admitted. In 1794 he paid a second visit to London, and then brought out the remaining six symphonies. George III. and his queen endeavored to persuade him to remain in England; the University of Oxford created him Doctor of Music; all classes testified their admiration of his genius; but he returned to Vienna in 1795, where he was, as in London, the "unrivaled master."

In the suburbs of Vienna he purchased a small house and garden, where he composed his oratorios the *Creation* and the *Seasons*, the latter being first produced under the title of *Die Jahreszeiten*, April 24, 1801. This labor was too hard for him; the unpoetical text had annoyed him, and after finishing it he had an attack of brain fever, and his strength, both mental and physical, sensibly failed. From this period to his death he spent most of his time in his house and garden, which became one of the chief attractions in Vienna.

On March 27, 1808, he was once more induced to appear before the public. His *Creation* was about to be performed at the University. When he arrived at the door, Salieri, Beethoven, and other eminent composers, bore him to a seat of honor. At the famous passage, "And there was light!" in the first chorus, the audience burst into tumultuous applause, and

Haydn waved his hand toward heaven and exclaimed, "It comes from there!" He left the room at the end of the first part, and spread out his hands to bless the audience as he departed. This was his farewell act to the whole world. On May 31, 1808, in the seventy-eighth year of his age, the great composer departed, leaving his undying works behind. Of these, a list, made out in 1805, enumerates 118 symphonies, 83 quartets, 24 trios, 19 operas, 5 oratorios, 163 compositions for the baritone, 24 concertos for different instruments, 15 masses, 10 pieces of church music, 44 sonatas for piano-forte—with and without accompaniment, 42 German and Italian songs, 39 canons, 13 vocal pieces for 3 and 4 voices, 365 Scotch and English songs—arranged with accompaniments, 40 divertissements for from 3 to 9 instruments, besides a prodigious number of fantasias, capriccios, etc. His biographer says: "For more than half a century music flowed from his pen in a continuous stream, always new, always attractive, always cheerful, always beautiful, often grand, sometimes reaching the sublime, but never betraying any touches of really tragic sorrow or grief." He was the musical apostle of the beautiful, and the happy.

MOZART.

Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born Jan. 27, 1756, at Salzburg, where his father was sub-director of the archiepiscopal chapel. Possessed of extraordinary musical talent, as early as his fifth year he composed simple yet pleasant melodies, like himself, tender and full of affection. In 1762 his father took him, with his sister, to Munich; the children played before the Elector, and excited the deepest astonishment and wonder. In 1763-4 the Mozart family visited England, where young Mozart astonished his own father, as well as the public, by the accuracy and beauty of his performance. Symphonies of his own composition were produced in a public concert. He also composed six sonatas, and made Handel his study. Two years later he composed church music. Maria Theresa took a personal interest in young Wolfgang, and encouraged him to write religious pieces, and act as musical conductor when they were performed in the presence of the royal court. At this early age, too, he proved himself possessed of dramatic talent by the production of an opera named *Bastien and Bastienne*. In 1769 Archbishop Sigmund appointed young Mozart, then but thirteen years old, director of his concerts. In the winter of the same year he traveled with his father to Italy, giving concerts as they proceeded on their way, and everywhere creating the liveliest enthusiasm by his remarkable abilities as a musician. At Milan he composed the opera of *Mithridates*, which was publicly performed soon after he announced it. At the age of sixteen he had produced two requiems, a *stabat mater*, numerous offertories, hymns, four operas, two cantatas, thirteen symphonies, twenty-four piano-forte sonatas, besides a large number of concertos for different instruments, trios, quar-

letters, marches, and other minor pieces. He was then a consummate violinist, a grand organist, and the first pianist in the world. Notwithstanding his acknowledged abilities, he found it difficult, until 1770—when he was appointed composer to the imperial court at Vienna—to sustain his parents and sister, who depended in the main on him, and himself. In 1780 he composed the opera of *Idomeneo*, which is considered his greatest work in all respects. *Don Giovanni* was produced in 1787, and its frequent rendition in America testifies to the public appreciation of its merits at this day. Probably no one of his operas has been more frequently performed in public than the *Zauberflöte*, or *Magic Flute*, which was composed in 1791, the last year of his life. His celebrated Requiem was completed but a short time before his death; and doubtless many of its sublime passages were inspired by his anticipation of that event, which occurred on the 5th of December, 1791. His early death was probably due to the excessive strain upon his nervous system occasioned by his unremitting labors as a teacher, director, and composer of music. As an evidence of his diligence as a composer, more than eight hundred works of his are extant, of every conceivable character, and each evincing careful composition and a thorough mastery of the subject. As an operatic composer, he stands superior to all his predecessors. As a master in sacred music, no author has been studied and imitated by succeeding generations more than Mozart.

BEETHOVEN.

Ludwig Van Beethoven was the son of Johann Van Beethoven, a tenor singer at the Electoral chapel of Bonn. His grandfather, for whom he was named, was, during his lifetime, a bass singer of considerable eminence. Hence, in Beethoven, whose wonderful performances as composer and musician astonished the world, we have an excellent illustration of the theory of the transmission of talents. At a very early age Ludwig exhibited rare musical abilities; so much so, that his father, whose habits were bad, indulged the hope of deriving fame and profit from his precocity. Before he was four years of age he was trained at the harpsichord. He also received instruction from eminent musicians who were connected with the chapel in which his father was a singer, and at the age of ten performed with great skill and power on the piano, being able to render the most difficult compositions. At that early age, too, he had written several pieces which were thought worthy of being engraved. In his fifteenth year Beethoven was appointed assistant court organist, under the Elector Maximilian Francis, who thus early discovered the talent of the boy, and became his patron. In his eighteenth year he was sent by the Elector to Vienna, where he enjoyed the instructions of Mozart for a short period. The improvident habits of his father induced him, after the death of his mother, to return to Bonn and take charge, in a great measure, of his two younger brothers, Caspar

and Nicholas. As shown already in the history of Mozart, musicians did not, at that period, enjoy much remuneration from the exercise of their talent, other than the reputation they acquired in the community. Although organist in the chapel of Bonn, and member of the Electoral orchestra, in which he played the viola, and a teacher of music during his leisure moments, his income was small. In 1792, however, he was relieved of the care of his brothers, they having become old enough to take care of themselves, and he returned to Vienna, where he made his permanent residence. There he first appeared before the public as a pianist, and won golden opinions by his great skill and originality of execution. In this field of musical performance he had but one living rival—Joseph Woelfl—and that rivalry consisted in execution chiefly. In other respects, Beethoven was the superior. The admiration and respect shown him by all classes of society soon elevated him above want and enabled him to carry out his cherished designs with regard to music. Under Haydn he studied composition, and availed himself of the instruction of other masters in that department of music. When he fairly commenced to write, he entered into it with spirit and ardor, approaching inspiration. Sonatas, trios, quartettes, symphonies followed one another in rapid succession. To what extent he would have carried his compositions we are unable to say, had not an unfortunate physical infirmity developed itself. His hearing, the sense of greatest value to a musician, became impaired. This infirmity affected his mind most deeply for some time after its appearance. Being possessed, as his portrait represents him, of an intense mental temperament, and given to his pursuit with all the devotion of an ardent nature, such an obstacle to his enjoyment of gushing harmonies in the orchestra, or during a piano performance, galled him almost beyond toleration. In a letter to his brothers, his grief is thus poured out:

"Oh, what humiliation, when some one standing by me hears a distant flute, and I hear nothing! or listens to the song of the herdsman, and I hear no sound! Such incidents have brought me to the verge of despair—a little more, I had put an end to my life."

His deafness was occasioned by an hemorrhoidal difficulty, accompanied with a chronic weakness of the bowels, which, when it had abated, though it left him still deaf, enabled him to recover his cheerfulness in a degree.

He subsequently pursued his musical work with great industry. Among his later productions, the *Henri Symphony*, *Fidelio*, the *Battle of Vittoria*, the *Glorious Monument*, the *Grand Mass in D*—a three years' labor—the *Overture in C*, and several piano-forte sonatas, are most prominent. A suit at law, in which he became involved, occupied for some years a great part of his time and care, so that he was unable to continue his musical labors to the desired extent. This suit had reference to obtaining the guardianship of his brother Carl's

son, whom Carl, upon his death-bed, in 1815, had left to the special protection of his brother Ludwig. The widow of Carl, however, a woman of corrupt life, refused to surrender the boy until she was compelled to do so by process of law. The young man did not repay his uncle's care and kindness, for he fell into dissolute habits, and thus became a fresh source of grief to the tender and susceptible musician. Having undertaken a journey in his nephew's behalf, in cold and damp weather, Beethoven contracted a severe cold, which resulted in his death, March 26, 1827.

His music is animated by a warm and earnest soul. He endeavored to represent in his compositions thought, feeling and sentiment, and so introduced, to a great extent, a new feature into music. His piano sonatas are full of character-painting. On account of this quality in his performances, Beethoven attracted great attention wherever and whenever he performed. His soul seemed to speak through his fingers, and fascinated every listener. His brain was large, the quality of it fine; while his intensely active mental temperament energized and stimulated every portion of it. While Haydn and Mozart perfected instrumental music as to its form, Beethoven inspired it with life, and gave it power over the soul.

BACH.

Johann Sebastian Bach was born at Eisenach, Upper Saxony, March, 1685. The death of his father left him almost destitute at the early age of ten, and to earn a livelihood he entered the choir of St. Michael's, Lüneburg, as a soprano singer. Here he made rapid progress in the study and practice of music, so that in 1703 his ability had obtained for him the position of court musician at Weimar. In the following year the post of organist to the new church at Arnstadt was given him. In 1708 he was appointed court organist at Weimar by the reigning Duke of Saxony. While in this responsible position he applied himself diligently to study in every department of music. In 1717 he was made director of the electoral concerts, and afterward cantor to St. Thomas' School at Leipzig. About ten years later, the distinctions of kapellmeister to the Duke of Weissenfels, and court composer to the King of Poland, were conferred upon him. The close attention which Bach had given to his musical studies occasioned an affection of his eyes, which resulted in total blindness. An operation, sustained in the hope of obtaining relief, hastened his death, which occurred in July, 1750.

As a performer of sacred music on that grandest of instruments—the organ—Bach had no rival except Handel; and his compositions for that instrument possessed high reputation. For accuracy, elaboration, and grandeur his productions are unsurpassed. Bach had several children, three of whom became musicians of some note.

His portrait indicates a sanguine temperament, associated with much of the nervous. He was therefore susceptible in a high degree

to those emotions which inspire and impart depth of feeling and appreciation of the exalted.

MEDELSSOHN.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was born in Hamburg, Feb. 3, 1809. He was of Jewish extraction, and connected by the ties of relationship with one of the most prominent banking establishments in Europe. The name of Bartholdy was added to that of Mendelssohn by his father, out of regard to his wife, whose family name was Bartholdy.

As a youth, Mendelssohn exhibited marked talents in the way of music, so much so that Goethe became interested in him, and Hamill predicted a brilliant career for him. Before he had attained the age of six years he performed with much skill on the piano. Such were his pecuniary circumstances that he was enabled to avail himself of the best musical instruction, and had so far advanced that in his ninth year he gave a public concert in Berlin. At that early age he began to write musical compositions for the piano, violin, and other instruments.

In 1815 he wrote music of such a high character that it is considered standard. He traveled through Britain, France, and Italy, and gave concerts in the course of his tours. One of the most admirable of his productions is his overture to Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which he seems to have caught the spirit of the great dramatist, and blended in a manner both delicious and attractive the delicate, grotesque, and fanciful features of the poem. In the course of his travels he visited Scotland, where he created a deep impression by several clever compositions adapted to the bag-pipe. In 1835 he accepted the directorship of the famous Leipsic concerts, which he improved greatly.

His fame chiefly rests on an oratorio, well known in the musical world, the performance of which never fails to excite considerable interest. It is the oratorio *Elijah*. This was written especially for the Birmingham musical festival, which took place August 26, 1846. It is said that Mendelssohn was engaged for nine years in the preparation of this work, and superintended its performance.

The sudden death of a beloved sister, in 1817, so much impaired his health that he was obliged to relinquish his musical labors and take a tour in Switzerland; but this tour brought only temporary relief. His acutely nervous temperament had sustained such a shock that his brain became affected, causing his death in Leipsic, November 4, 1857.

His life presents an exception to the general tenor of the lives of those great musicians we have already considered. His circumstances were such that his devotion to music was untrammelled by those cares and struggles which beset the poor son of genius.

He wrote a great number of sonatas, concertos, trios, quartettes, etc., among his compositions for the piano-forte, *Songs Without Words* is regarded as one of the best piano compositions in the realm of music.

The portrait indicates a thoughtful, studious, earnest nature, with a vein of vivacity which lights up the otherwise thoughtful face, and sparkles in his music.

ROSSINI.

The great masters whom we have already considered were of German origin. Like the profound philosophy of their country, they made music thoughtful and profound. The musician now claiming our special notice represents a lighter and more buoyant class of music—a style which in modern days has secured general acceptance. Gioacchino Rossini was born at Pesaro, Italy, in 1792. Before he was seven years old, his father, who was attached to a band of strolling players, was arrested and imprisoned for some political reasons. His mother, an earnest and energetic woman, took young Rossini to Bologna, where she adopted the theatrical profession as a means of supporting herself and her son. At Bologna, the boy's musical talent (which had been early exhibited) was cultivated under the direction of an eminent teacher. He studied with indefatigable industry such works of the old masters as he could find in the public libraries, and at the same time learned by himself to play on the violin, horn, and other instruments. On the violincello and piano he received lessons, and made great progress. When scarcely twenty-one he produced the celebrated opera of *Tancrède*, which was first performed at Vienna, and excited an extraordinary sensation. Between 1810 and 1820 Rossini composed thirty of the thirty-four Italian operas which bear his name. After 1820 he left Italy and settled in France, where *William Tell* was written in 1829. He was for some time director of the Italian opera at Paris, but lost that post in 1830, in consequence of the revolution which then broke out. Bologna and Florence successively became his residence, and finally, in 1855, he returned to Paris, where he still lives, the center of a large circle of musicians and warm friends.

As a composer, Rossini can worthily be called the greatest of Italian musicians. His productions are fresh, vigorous, and sprightly, and always receive the warmest expressions of approval when publicly rendered. Probably among his works the operas of *The Barber of Seville* and *William Tell* claim the chief place, while those of *Tancrède* and *Semiramide* have, ever since their appearance, maintained a strong hold on public fancy.

Rossini appears to possess that happy combination of temperament and organization which promotes bodily and mental vigor. The vivacity and pliancy of his nature is no less shown in his music than in the features of his well-rounded face.

AUBER.

Daniel Francois Esprit Auber, the great representative of French music, was born at Caen, in Normandy, January 20th, 1784. His father was a printseller in Paris, and with the sentiment of a true tradesman desired that his son should devote himself to that calling; but

young Daniel loved music more than merchandise or literature, and finally overcame his parent's objections to his following the bent of his own inclinations. As an instrumentalist he did not acquire an exalted reputation; but as a composer of various kinds of music, much of which is still in use, he early became famed.

His first attempts in the operatic field were coldly received; but his perseverance, stimulated by the death of his father, which threw him on his own resources, at length won success. He endeavored to imitate the style of Rossini, and so materially impaired his own original and flowing style, and lost somewhat in popular esteem. The operas of *Fra Diavolo*, *Le Bal Masque*, or the Masked Ball, *Le Cheval de Bronze*, or the Bronze Horse, *Les Diamants de la Couronne*, or the Crown Diamonds, are the productions of his pen.

After the death of Cherubini, in 1842, Auber was appointed Director of the Conservatory of Music at Paris.

His portrait indicates a well-sustained physique, a racy and ardent temperament. He was fond of society, and enjoyed the lighter phases of life.